



Homebirth Services in Central Vermont

## Herbal Allies during the Postpartum Period

The first days after birth encompass great transitions. Your body, mind and spirit are all going through rapid adjustments and changes. Herbs can be a soothing ally during these times. When all goes well, herbs can assist and encourage your postpartum process and adjusting to your new life. If you are experiencing difficulties, herbs can aid with the repairing and healing of your body and spirit. The following is a list of herbs and herbal recipes for the postpartum period.

### Herbal Allies

You can obtain herbs by growing them yourself, by checking with neighbors and friends who have gardens, getting them from health food stores and herb shops, or online from herb companies. They can be purchased fresh, dried, or as prepared teas, tinctures, oils and salves. Herbs may be steeped into teas, made into compresses and salves and applied externally, used to flavor foods, and used as tincture for medicine. You can buy these preparations ready-made or make them yourself!

#### **ALFALFA** (*Medicago Sativa*)

Alfalfa greatly increases your milk supply and can help to get your pelvic floor strong again.

#### **BLESSED THISTLE** (*Cnicus benedictus*)

Famed for its ability to increase milk supply, it is also a wonderful healer of many postpartum problems including postpartum depression, issues with breast milk and hormonal rebalancing after the birth.

#### **BORAGE** (*Borago officinalis*)

Borage leaf tea will increase your milk supply, is a mild laxative and is soothing to jangled nerves. It also contains potassium, which can help you think more clearly.



Homebirth Services in Central Vermont

### **CALENDULA** (*Calendula off.*)

A soothing ally for many skin issues including perineal tears. Use in sitz baths, as a tea for warm compresses and as an oil for cracked and sore nipples.

### **CATNIP** (*Nepeta cataria*)

A great ally in easing after pains, it relieves spasms of the uterus, keeps the after-flow moving out easily and clot free and relaxes nervous tension.

### **CHAMOMILE**

Drinking tea brewed from this herb will aid you in falling asleep, brighten your eyes and help relieve cranky tired moods. Chamomile is a great ally when your feeling tired, restless, sleepless and worried.

### **COMFREY** (*Symphytum off.*)

Drink it and sit in it! Drinking a cup a day helps build new cells rapidly and helps to alleviate pain. Comfrey is essential in herbal sitz baths. It soothes and heals, keeps your vaginal tissues flexible and alleviates itching.

### **ECHINACEA** (*Echinacea agustifolia*)

It acts as an immune booster and stimulant. It is used as a preventative for postpartum infection, as a treatment for mastitis and inflamed breasts, and in general for many sicknesses or colds.

### **LAVENDER** (*Lavandula off.*)

This sweet smelling fragrant herb is a great ally for the baby blues as well as postpartum depression. It is soothing, calming and wonderful in relieving anxiety and helping one to relax.



Homebirth Services in Central Vermont

**LEMON BALM** (*Melissa off.*)

This sweet tasting herb is considered a specific for helping one cope with life situations that are difficult to accept. It's great for depression, melancholy and anxiety after the birth.

**MOTHERWORT** (*Leonorus cardiaca*)

Named herb of the mother, this herb is of great use during postpartum. It is a uterine toner, helps in relieving after pains, and is also helpful in easing nervous tension. It is said to give clear-minded, non-drowsy relief from the tension and confusion of overwhelming emotion. NOTE: Motherwort is a powerful herb, a little goes a long way. Use sparingly.

**NETTLES** (*Urtica Dioca*)

Nettles are nourishing and highly nutritive. They are high in chlorophyll, vitamins A, C, D and K, calcium, potassium, iron and sulphur. They help in easing after pains, healing hemorrhoids, increasing milk supply and aiding the body in healing from the birth.

**RED RASPBERRY LEAF** (*Rubus stigosus*)

Red Raspberry contains vitamins C, A, B complex, E, and many minerals as well. It tones and nourishes the uterine muscle, reduces after pains, regulates vaginal discharge and is wonderful for increasing milk quantity and quality.



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## Herbal Recipes

### Postpartum Sitz Bath

Equal parts **Lavender buds, Rose petals, Calendula flowers, Comfrey leaf, Yarrow** and **Rosemary**. Add 1 part herbal mix to ¼ part sea salt. Pour boiling water over the mixture and let steep, covered for 30 minutes or longer. Strain the herbs and add the tea to your warm water sitz bath. This will help bring blood flow to the area, aid in the healing process and feel soothing and relieving to the perineum.

### Postpartum Tonic Tea

The following herbs will help bring hormone levels back to balance, tone the uterus, nourish the nervous system and uplift the spirit. Add 1 part **Blessed thistle**, 1 part **St. Johnswort**, 1 part **Sacred basil**, 1 part **Angelica**, 2 parts **Vitex berries** and 2 parts **False unicorn root**. Combine the herbs and simmer 3-6 tablespoons of roots and berries to 1 quart of water. Remove from the heat and let it steep with the leaves and flowers for another 5-15 min. Drink daily as a tonic!

### Nursing Mother's Herbal Tea

The following herbs are rich in minerals and vitamins and stimulate healthy milk production. Mix 2 parts **Red raspberry leaves**, 3 parts **Fennel seeds**, 1 part **Nettle leaves**, 1 part **Borage leaves** and 1 part **Blessed thistle leaves and flowers**. Place 4-6 tablespoons of herbs in a quart jar and cover with boiling water. Steep, covered, for 5-15 min and drink 1-4 cups a day.

### Postpartum Tea for Relaxing

Mix 2 parts **Lemon balm** with 1 part **Lavender flowers**, 1 part **Chamomile**, 1 part **Catnip** and 1 part **Borage**. Make 6 tablespoons herbs per 1 quart of hot steaming water. Steep, covered, for 5-10 minutes and drink warm or cool throughout the day.