

Raspberry Leaf Tea



Raspberry leaf is a traditional herbal remedy which may tone the uterus in preparation for labour. Certain chemicals in the leaves are thought to act like the pregnancy hormone, oestrogen, although recent Australian research has not conclusively proved that it works. If you're considering taking raspberry leaf, the tea is better than tablets, although not everyone likes the taste. Buy loose leaves or teabags, but make sure you buy raspberry *leaf*, not fruit tea. Start with just one cup / tablet daily at about 32 weeks of pregnancy – it needs time to take effect so don't leave it until the end of pregnancy, but also don't take it any earlier unless it's prescribed by a qualified herbalist. Allow your body to get used to the effects for a few days, then increase the dose gradually every few days until you are taking 3 – 4 cups / tablets, spread throughout the day. You may experience strong Braxton Hicks contractions – pregnancy tightenings which send oxygen to your baby - especially when you first start taking raspberry leaf. If these are excessive, reduce the amount of raspberry leaf to a level at which you feel more comfortable.

Precautions - do remember that raspberry leaf contains powerful chemicals which act in the same way as drugs – just because it's natural doesn't mean it's safe for everyone. If you've had a previous Caesarean, avoid raspberry leaf as it may put stress the uterine scar. Similarly if you've had a premature labour or very rapid labour, or any vaginal bleeding, either in this pregnancy or a previous one, avoid raspberry leaf as it may cause contractions. It should also be avoided if you are expecting more than one baby, or have any serious pregnancy complications eg severe high blood pressure, breech baby (bottom first) or you're due to have a planned Caesarean for specific medical reasons. If you are anaemic & have been prescribed iron tablets, you should stop the raspberry leaf as it may reduce the amount of iron (& other minerals such as calcium & magnesium) that your body absorbs. Also avoid raspberry leaf if you're taking anti-depressants.

Always inform your midwife if you intend to take raspberry leaf during pregnancy

Leaflet written by Denise Tiran, Expectancy's Director, and intended as a general guide only