

Herbal Infusions and their Benefits and Properties

The first and perhaps the most important of the herbs that I prefer that you use are nourishing and tonifying herbal infusions. These are specially prepared “teas” and are the basis of good health in my opinion. Every woman, man and child can benefit hugely from nourishing infusions. I prefer that you make these infusions part of your everyday nutrition. Please drink about a quart of infusion a day.

The four main infusions I want you to use are *Nettle leaf*, *Oatstraw*, *Raspberry leaf*, and *Alfalfa* (NORA). For variety in health benefits and flavor add Peppermint as well.

To Prepare NORA Tea:

- Mix equal parts of dried herbs together.
- Place approximately one and one-quarter cup (1 ounce) of dried herbs inside quart jar.
- Pour boiling water into the jar, filling the jar to the top.
- Using a wooden chopstick or wooden utensil, poke the herbs down until all bubbles are removed.
- Add more water, making sure it goes to the top of the jar.
- Cover tightly and let steep for 4 to 8 hours or overnight.
- Strain infusion through a mesh strainer, squeezing, and pressing herbs to remove as much liquid as possible.
- Store infusion in refrigerator.
- Drink throughout the day.
- Infusion may be sweetened with honey, sugar, or Stevia if desired.
- Prepare and drink this daily.

Additional hints for using infusions:

Nettle leaf is the first choice for its incredible benefits for pregnant women (and everyone else as well). It is a very rich infusion, and is very dark green. When you first try it, you may find it too strong. Please try to adjust. When I first began drinking it, I would ice it, water it down and sweeten with honey or stevia. After the first few times it just tastes like rich tea.

Oatstraw can smell a bit grassy when brewing but it has a nice flavor and tastes like sun tea.

Raspberry leaf is a close second in its benefits for pregnancy and women in general. This herb is very high in tannins. This means it is very strong tasting. This tea can be brewed together with nettle to improve the flavor and meld the flavors.

Alfalfa can smell a bit grassy as well but it has a mild, earthy, slightly sweet taste.

Think of infusions as a health beverage, a beauty treatment (shining hair, lovely skin, sparkling eyes, well rested appearance), and an insurance plan for having the healthiest pregnancy possible, giving your baby the best start, and easing both of your transitions into your new life as a breastfeeding mother/baby dyad.

Determine to make this “superfood” the beverage of choice each and every day.

Recommended Herbs:

Nettle leaf (*Urtica dioica*):

- Properties - Contains 1000 mg of calcium, every mineral required by the body including the all important folic acid, chlorophyll, protein, antioxidants, carotenes, linoleic/formic/linolenic acid, Vitamin E, glucoquinones, and phytosterols.
- Benefits include improving the blood's ability to carry iron, helping to stabilize blood sugar, regulating weight, reducing fatigue, improves stamina, increasing vitamin K in the blood, improving thyroid function, and restoring proper adrenal function.

Oatstraw (*Avina sativa*):

- Properties - Contains calcium, minerals, vitamins, and steroidal saponins (which nourish the pancreas, liver and adrenals).
- Benefits include increasing elasticity of the blood vessels, reducing hemorrhoids and varicose veins; and strengthening the tissues of the bladder, urethra and vagina.

Raspberry leaf (*Rubus species*):

- Properties - Contains rich minerals including phosphorus, potassium, calcium, and iron; vitamins A, B, C, and E.
- Benefits include toning the muscles of the uterus (reduces the intensity of sensations during labor and postpartum), helping prevent miscarriage and hemorrhage, and facilitating placental release.

***Caution – It is recommended to not drink Raspberry leaf tea until the second trimester.**

Alfalfa (*Medicago sativa*):

- Properties - Contains high levels of vitamins A, D, B, and K, minerals and digestive enzymes; thought to reduce the risk of postpartum hemorrhage in late pregnancy.
- Benefits include improving blood clotting because of vitamin K; lowering risk for heart disease, diabetes, cancer, Alzheimer's disease, etc.; steadying blood sugar; lowering cholesterol; and promoting a healthy urinary tract by increasing urine flow.

Peppermint (*Mentha piperita*):

- Properties - Contains Folic acid, carotenes, calcium, iron, phosphorus, potassium, vitamin B1 (Thiamin), vitamin B2 (Riboflavin), and vitamin B6 (pyridoxine).
- Benefits include increasing the body temperature (helps with the common cold); increasing energy; improving immune system; having healthier skin; improving strength and flexibility of bones; strengthening the nerves; easing emotions, decreasing flatulence, decreasing in cancer; and (as most of us know) soothing the stomach.

***Caution – This should be brewed as a mild tea and mixed in with any infusion you wish for flavor and NOT made up as an infusion.**