
American Botanical Council

HerbClip

FILE: Herbs for Women

Date: October 3, 1996

HC 10-3-6-1

TO: General Distribution

RE: **Herbs for Women**

Foster, Steven. Herbs for Women. *Veggie Life*, September, 1996, pp. 70, 72-75.

In many cultures, herbal wisdom has traditionally been the realm of women, who pass it down from generation to generation. Herbs useful for women's reproductive health are important and prolific; some of the best are discussed below.

For mood swings and irritability related to the menstrual cycle, the sedative effects of valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*) may be useful for some women. For other menstrual problems, the normalizing effect of Vitex or chaste tree (*Vitex agnus-castus*) may be called for. Women experiencing symptoms related to hormone imbalance, such as abnormal periods, PMS, and infertility, may be able to benefit from chaste tree's ability to help normalize the activity of the hypothalamus pituitary system. For these purposes, chaste tree does not work overnight; allow four to 18 months before expecting results. For stimulating milk flow, chaste tree has also been shown to be highly effective, more effective, in fact, than Vitamin B1 for this purpose.

Another herb useful for PMS is evening primrose (*Oenothera biennis*) seed oil. This oil is high in gammalinolenic acid (GLA), an essential fatty acid which can correct imbalances manifesting as mood swings, irritability, and breast tenderness. Dosage is three to six capsules a day, with meals.

Dong-quai (*Angelica sinensis*) is an herb used in traditional Chinese medicine to restore women's reproductive balance, by nourishing the blood, harmonizing the vital energy, and by rebalancing the menstrual cycle. In Western terminology, dong quai would be considered a tonic for women's reproductive health. It is used for PMS, menstrual difficulties and menopausal imbalances.

Raspberry leaf (*Rubus idaeus*) can help strengthen a pregnant woman's womb in preparation for childbirth. It can also help with morning sickness

and can ease labor pains. Black cohosh (*Cimicifuga racemosa*) is used problems associated with menopause, particularly hot flashes. The daily dose of black cohosh is 0.3 to 2.0 grams of dried root.

Bin #96