



5-W

Five-week formula to prepare a woman's body for labor and delivery

This formula is for use in the last five weeks of pregnancy, hence the name 5-W. It is designed to help prepare the body for labor and delivery. 5-W is designed to help labor begin on time and to make labor easier. In addition to preparing for delivery, 5-W has been known to help with menstrual disorders, morning sickness and hot flashes.

The herbs included in this formula are:

Black Cohosh root

Well-known for its estrogenic effects, black cohosh is contraindicated during the early stages of pregnancy because it can bring on premature labor. However, during the final stages of labor, this action is beneficial in preventing overdue babies. In fact, the name "cohosh" appears to come from an Algonquian Indian word that is associated with pregnancy.

Black cohosh has some great benefits besides its estrogenic action. It is one of the best antispasmodic herbs for relaxing muscle cramps and spasms. This action makes black cohosh excellent both for aiding the dilation of the cervix and for easing childbirth by reducing muscle spasms and cramps.

Another benefit of black cohosh is its ability to ease pain. A source of natural salicylates, black cohosh has a mild analgesic action. Black cohosh is a nervine and hormonal herb. It has an estrogenic effect in that it either promotes an increase in estrogen levels in the body or contains compounds that mimic the effects of estrogen. As a result of this quality, it is counter-indicated in the early stages of pregnancy because it can bring on premature labor. However, during the last five weeks of pregnancy it is helpful in ensuring timely labor.

The black cohosh root is high in iron and vitamin A, making it a good herb for women who are menstruating. Its bitter compounds have a nervine effect that helps relieve spastic muscles, dilates peripheral blood vessels and helps reduce blood pressure. These actions help tone the uterus before pregnancy and aids the uterus and other muscles during childbirth. The plant has also been used for menstrual cramps, nervous tension, anxiety, hysteria, fevers, menopause and headaches.

Squaw Vine herb

As the name suggests, the American Indians used this herb extensively for irregular menstruation and to prepare the uterus for childbirth. It has been used to help speed up delivery and encourage regular contractions.

Dong Quai root

This Chinese herb is sometimes referred to as a female ginseng because of its many useful properties as a tonic for the female reproductive system. It is primarily used to build the blood and since pregnant women often have problems with anemia in the last trimester of pregnancy, this action can be very helpful. Dong quai also stimulates circulation to the pelvis.

Dong quai, like black cohosh, should generally be avoided during earlier stages of pregnancy because of its estrogenic effects. However, again, by taking this herb during the last five weeks of pregnancy, it will help to prepare the body for labor and delivery.

Butcher's Broom root

Butcher's broom is used for hemorrhoids, varicose veins and thrombosis. In addition, it is a diuretic, anti-inflammatory and an enhancer of circulation. This herb contains steroidal saponins that cause blood vessels to constrict and blood to thin. This herb is important because women often have circulatory problems, such as varicose veins, during the final months of pregnancy.

Red Raspberry leaves

Red raspberry leaves are well known for treating childhood diarrhea, vomiting and the flu. They are used for the similar purposes of relieving nausea in childbirth, as well as toning the uterus, preventing spotting and reducing pain in childbirth. They will help reduce pain during labor and after birth and aid in speedy recovery (they does not counter the pain of pelvic dilation). They are probably one of the most important herbs a woman can take during pregnancy. Since they are only a minor ingredient in this formula, it may be wise for pregnant women to consider taking extra red raspberry capsules or drinking red raspberry tea with this formula.

Suggested Use:

Pregnant women should take 2 capsules three times daily, with a meal, during the last 5 weeks of pregnancy. This formula works in a manner that helps bring on labor and make the birthing process easier. Both black cohosh and dong quai have blood-thinning actions, so if you have a tendency for heavy bleeding, you may want to avoid taking 5-W.

Selected References

- Nutritional Herbology: A Reference Guide to Herbs* by Mark Pedersen
- The Wild Rose Scientific Herbal* by Terry Willard
- Herbs, Helps and Pressure Points for Pregnancy and Childbirth* by Katherine Tarr
- Polly's Birth Book: Obstetrics for the Home* by Polly Block

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