



Blue Cohosh

Revised: December 3, 2018.

CASRN: 84929-23-7

Drug Levels and Effects

Summary of Use during Lactation

Blue cohosh (*Caulophyllum thalictroides*) root contains N-methylcytosine, which has nicotine-like effects, and caulosaponin, a glycoside that constricts coronary vessels and may have oxytocic activity. It has been used to promote labor.[1][2][3] Blue cohosh has no specific uses during breastfeeding. No data exist on the safety and efficacy of blue cohosh in nursing mothers or infants; however, it can cause severe gastrointestinal and cardiovascular toxicity, including in neonates whose mothers used it to stimulate labor. Most sources recommend strongly against its use during breastfeeding because of lack of safety data and potential toxicity.[2][4]

Dietary supplements do not require extensive pre-marketing approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Manufacturers are responsible to ensure the safety, but do not need to *prove* the safety and effectiveness of dietary supplements before they are marketed. Dietary supplements may contain multiple ingredients, and differences are often found between labeled and actual ingredients or their amounts. A manufacturer may contract with an independent organization to verify the quality of a product or its ingredients, but that does *not* certify the safety or effectiveness of a product. Because of the above issues, clinical testing results on one product may not be applicable to other products. More detailed information [about dietary supplements](#) is available elsewhere on the LactMed Web site.

Drug Levels

Maternal Levels. Relevant published information was not found as of the revision date.

Infant Levels. Relevant published information was not found as of the revision date.

Effects in Breastfed Infants

Relevant published information was not found as of the revision date.

Effects on Lactation and Breastmilk

Relevant published information was not found as of the revision date.

References

1. Allaire AD, Moos MK, Wells SR. Complementary and alternative medicine in pregnancy: a survey of North Carolina certified nurse-midwives. *Obstet Gynecol.* 2000;95:19-23. PubMed PMID: 10636495.
2. Dennehy C, Tsourounis C, Bui L, King TL. The use of herbs by California midwives. *J Obstet Gynecol Neonatal Nurs.* 2010;39:684-93. PubMed PMID: 21044150.
3. Low Dog T. The use of botanicals during pregnancy and lactation. *Altern Ther Health Med.* 2009;15:54-8. PubMed PMID: 19161049.
4. Dugoua JJ, Perri D, Seely D, Mills E, Koren G. Safety and efficacy of blue cohosh (*Caulophyllum thalictroides*) during pregnancy and lactation. *Can J Clin Pharmacol.* 2008;15:e66-73. PubMed PMID: 18204101.

Substance Identification

Substance Name

Blue Cohosh

Scientific Name

Caulophyllum thalictroides

CAS Registry Number

84929-23-7

Drug Class

Breast Feeding

Lactation

Complementary Therapies

Phytotherapy

Plants, Medicinal