U.S. National Library of Medicine
National Center for Biotechnology Information

NLM Citation: Drugs and Lactation Database (LactMed) [Internet]. Bethesda (MD): National Library of Medicine (US); 2006-. Eleuthero. [Updated 2018 Dec 3].
Bookshelf URL: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/

Eleuthero

Revised: December 3, 2018.

CASRN: 84696-12-8

Drug Levels and Effects

Summary of Use during Lactation

Eleuthero (Eleutherococcus senticosus) is also known as Siberian ginseng, but it is not related to true ginseng and has different constituents. Eleuthero contains eleutherosides--eleutherosides B (syringin) and E (syringaresinol) that are used to identify Siberian ginseng. Some other ingredients are acanthosides, phytosterols, triterpene saponins, dihydrodehydrodiconiferyl alcohol monopyranose, glycosides, 5'-O-caffeoylquinic acid isomers, glucopyranosides, and lignans. Eleuthero has no specific uses during breastfeeding, but is most often used as an adaptogen (i.e., to increase endurance and improve memory). It is also used to boost immunity, and as an antimicrobial and chemoprotectant. However, no good human evidence supports any of these uses. No data exist on the safety and efficacy of eleuthero in nursing mothers or infants. In general, it is well tolerated. It may increase blood pressure, increase bleeding and increase blood sugar. Breast tenderness has been reported. Most sources recommend against the use of eleuthero during breastfeeding because of a lack of safety data.

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

A mother who took a product labeled as "pure Siberian ginseng" during pregnancy and breastfeeding gave birth to a hirsute Caucasian infant with thick black pubic hair, hair on the whole forehead, swollen red nipples, and enlarged testes. The infant's serum testosterone, cortisol and 17-hydroxyprogesterone were within normal limits. After breastfeeding was stopped at 2 weeks of age, the excess hair began to fall out and was gone by 7.5 weeks of age.[1] Later analysis of the product found that it was not Eleutherococcus, but the bark of the silk vine (Periploca sepium), possibly contaminated with some other unidentified product.[2][3]

Effects on Lactation and Breastmilk

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

References

1. Koren G, Randor S, Martin S, Danneman D. Maternal ginseng use associated with neonatal androgenization. JAMA. 1990;264:2866. Letter. PubMed PMID: 2232076.
2. Waller DP, Martin AM, Farnsworth NR, Awang DV. Lack of androgenicity of Siberian ginseng. JAMA. 1992;267:2329. Letter. PubMed PMID: 1564770.
3. Foster S, Tyler VE. Tyler's honest herbal. A sensible guide to the use of herbs and related remedies. 4th ed. New York; Haworth Herbal Press. 1999;191.

Substance Identification

Substance Name

Eleuthero

Scientific Name

Eleutherococcus senticosus

CAS Registry Number

84696-12-8

Drug Class

Breast Feeding

Lactation

Complementary Therapies

Phytotherapy

Plants, Medicinal