



Ginseng

Revised: December 3, 2018.

CASRN: 50647-08-0; 92347-06-3

Drug Levels and Effects

Summary of Use during Lactation

The roots of American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*), Asian ginseng (*Panax ginseng*), and several other species contain steroidal saponins called ginsenosides that are purported to be adaptogens (i.e., to increase endurance and improve memory). Ginseng has no specific uses during breastfeeding. Ginseng is generally well tolerated in adults and is "generally recognized as safe" (GRAS) by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The most common side effects include headache, hypertension, diarrhea, sleeplessness, skin rash, and vaginal bleeding. Ginseng decreases the blood levels of some drugs, such as warfarin, and enhances the effect of sedating drugs. With long-term use, nervousness, diarrhea, confusion, depression or depersonalization may occur. Gynecomastia and breast pain have been reported.[1][2] No data exist on the safety and efficacy of ginseng in nursing mothers or infants. Because of its possible estrogenic activity and lack of information during breastfeeding, many sources recommend that ginseng not be used during lactation.

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.

Disclaimer: Information presented in this database is not meant as a substitute for professional judgment. You should consult your healthcare provider for breastfeeding advice related to your particular situation. The U.S. government does not warrant or assume any liability or responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of the information on this Site .

Effects on Lactation and Breastmilk

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

References

1. Seely D, Dugoua JJ, Perri D et al. Safety and efficacy of Panax ginseng during pregnancy and lactation. *Can J Clin Pharmacol*. 2008;15:e87-94. PubMed PMID: 18204104.
2. Coon JT, Ernst E. Panax ginseng: a systematic review of adverse effects and drug interactions. *Drug Saf*. 2002;25:323-44. PubMed PMID: 12020172.

Substance Identification

Substance Name

Ginseng

Scientific Name

Panax ginseng; Panax quinquefolius

CAS Registry Number

50647-08-0; 92347-06-3

Drug Class

Breast Feeding

Lactation

Complementary Therapies

Phytotherapy

Plants, Medicinal