



## Coleus

Revised: December 3, 2018.

## Drug Levels and Effects

### Summary of Use during Lactation

*Coleus amboinicus* leaves are a traditional galactagogue used in Indonesia called torbangun or bangun-bangun in the local languages.[1] One study of poor quality indicated that it might have some efficacy in mothers who were not instructed in proper technique, thus inadequate to establish activity.[2][3] Galactagogues should never replace evaluation and counseling on modifiable factors that affect milk production.[4] No data exist on the excretion of any components of *Coleus amboinicus* into breastmilk or on the safety and efficacy of *Coleus amboinicus* in nursing mothers or infants, although it has been used for hundreds of years in Indonesia with apparent safety. A related plant, *Coleus forskohlii*, is well tolerated as a supplement.

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

A study of 67 healthy women who delivered a fullterm infant and desired to breastfeed for at least 4 months compared torbangun (*Coleus amboinicus*), fenugreek, and a control product containing placental extract and

vitamin B12 (Molocco+B12) for their effects on breastmilk volume. No mention was made of any breastfeeding support provided to the women. Participants were randomly assigned to receive one of the products for 30 days and followed for another 30 days. A soup was made from 150 grams of *Coleus amboinicus* leaves 6 days per week for 30 days, beginning on the second postpartum day, and it was consumed during the day. Infants were weighed before and after each nursing at 2-week intervals during the study to measure 24-hour milk volume. In the torbangun group, the milk volume on day 28 was statistically greater than on day 14. The increase in milk volume on day 28 was 33% in the torbangun group, compared to a decrease of 15% in the control group and a decrease of 14% in the fenugreek group. However, the baseline production in the torbangun group was 20 to 23% lower than in the other groups and there was no statistical difference in milk volume at any time compared to the initial volume of milk in the control group. Analysis of breastmilk found no decrease in nutritional quality of milk in the torbangun group.[5]

## References

1. Damanik R. Torbangun (*Coleus amboinicus* lour): a Batakese traditional cuisine perceived as lactagogue by Batakese lactating women in Simalungun, North Sumatera, Indonesia. *J Hum Lact*. 2008;25:64-72. PubMed PMID: 18984829.
2. Mortel M, Mehta SD. Systematic review of the efficacy of herbal galactogogues. *J Hum Lact*. 2013;29:154-62. PubMed PMID: 23468043.
3. Zapantis A, Steinberg JG, Schilit L. Use of herbals as galactagogues. *J Pharm Pract*. 2012;25:222-31. PubMed PMID: 22392841.
4. Brodribb W. ABM Clinical Protocol #9: Use of galactogogues in initiating or augmenting maternal milk production, second revision 2018. *Breastfeed Med*. 2018;13:307-14. PubMed PMID: 29902083.
5. Damanik R, Wahlqvist ML, Wattanapenpaiboon N. Lactagogue effects of Torbangun, a Batakese traditional cuisine. *Asia Pac J Clin Nutr*. 2006;15:267-74. PubMed PMID: 16672214.

## Substance Identification

### Substance Name

Coleus

### Scientific Name

*Coleus amboinicus*

### Drug Class

Breast Feeding

Lactation

Complementary Therapies

Phytotherapy

Plants, Medicinal