



## Parsley

Revised: December 3, 2018.

## Drug Levels and Effects

### Summary of Use during Lactation

Parsley (*Carum petroselinum*) leaf, seed, and root contain the volatile oils apiol and myristicin, which is pharmacologically active, as well as flavonoids, beta-phellandrene; bergapten; and vitamins A and C. Warm compresses or poultices of parsley have been used to treat breast engorgement and mastalgia[1][2] Oral capsules containing sage and parsley capsules are said to decrease milk flow; however, no scientifically valid clinical trials support this use. Galactogogues should never replace evaluation and counseling on modifiable factors that affect milk production.[3] No data exist on the excretion of any components of parsley into breastmilk or on the safety and efficacy of parsley nursing mothers or infants. Parsley is "generally recognized as safe" (GRAS) as a food by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Adverse reactions are primarily allergic, including cross reactions to other members of the Apiaceae family, such as carrot, celery, and fennel. The essential oil should not be used because of potential toxicity of its apiol and myristicin content.

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

Oral capsules containing sage and parsley capsules are said to decrease milk flow;[4][5][6] however, no scientifically valid clinical trials support this use.

One hundred fifty-eight mothers in Iran of who reported difficulty in breastfeeding were given either a proprietary mixture of herbs (Shirafza Drop) or a chlorophyll solution as a placebo. The herbal mixture contained the purported galactogogues fennel, anise, cumin, black seed, and parsley. Infant ages ranged between 0 and 6 months and they were exclusively breastfed. Weight gain of the infants was measured over time. No difference in infant weight gain was seen between the two groups of infants.[7] Blinding and randomization in this study is unclear.

## References

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2. Yarnell E. Botanical medicine in pregnancy and lactation. *Altern Complement Ther*. 1997;3 (April):93-100.
3. 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.
4. Petrie KA, Peck MR. Alternative medicine in maternity care. *Prim Care*. 2000;27:117-36. PubMed PMID: 10739460.
5. Larimore WL, Petrie KA. Drug use during pregnancy and lactation. *Primary Care*. 2000;27:35-53. PubMed PMID: 10739456.
6. Eglash A. Treatment of maternal hypergalactia. *Breastfeed Med*. 2014;9:423-5. PubMed PMID: 25361472.
7. Shariati M, Mamoori GA, Khadivzade T. The survey of effect of using "Shirafza Drop" by nursing mothers on weight gain (WG) of 0-6 months exclusively breastfed. *Horizon Med Sci*. 2004;10:24-30.

## Substance Identification

### Substance Name

Parsley

### Scientific Name

*Carum petroselinum*

### Drug Class

Breast Feeding

Lactation

Complementary Therapies

Phytotherapy

Plants, Medicinal