



Euphorbia

Revised: December 3, 2018.

Drug Levels and Effects

Summary of Use during Lactation

There are over 2000 species of Euphorbia containing numerous chemical compounds, although no specific active ingredients have been identified. Several Euphorbia species have been used as galactogogues in various cultures, such as Euphorbia lancifolia (called ixbut in the local language) by the Mayans in Guatemala,[1] Euphorbia hirta in India,[2][3] and Euphorbia serpyllifolia and other species by American Indians. No scientifically valid clinical trials support this use; however, some evidence in animals found that a Euphorbia extract increases serum prolactin.[4] Galactogogues should never replace evaluation and counseling on modifiable factors that affect milk production.[5] No data exist on the excretion of any components of Euphorbia into breastmilk. Euphorbia species exude a white sap that can cause contact sensitization and ocular toxicity if it gets in the eye. Taken orally, Euphorbia can cause nausea and vomiting.

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

Animal studies have demonstrated an increase in serum prolactin after intravenous administration of an extract of *Euphorbia hirta*.^[4]

References

1. Rosengarten F Jr. A neglected Mayan galactagogue -- ixbut (*Euphorbia lancifolia*). *J Ethnopharmacol.* 1982;5:91-112. PubMed PMID: 7033669.
2. Sayed NZ, Deo R, Mukundan U. Herbal remedies used by Warlis of Dahanu to induce lactation in nursing mothers. *Indian J Tradit Knowl.* 2007;6:602-5.
3. Rajith NP, Navas M, Muhammad Thata A et al. A study on traditional mother care plants of rural communities of South Kerala. *Indian J Tradit Knowl.* 2010;9:203-8.
4. Sawadogo L, Thibault JF, Rouau X et al. The lactogenic action of plant extracts. In, Martinet J, Houdebine LM, Herbert H, eds. *Biology of lactation.* Paris. Institut National de la Recherche Agrono. 1999;553-64.
5. 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.

Substance Identification

Substance Name

Euphorbia

Scientific Name

Euphorbia sp.

Drug Class

Breast Feeding

Lactation

Complementary Therapies

Phytotherapy

Plants, Medicinal