



Vivante Midwifery

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Liver Support During Pregnancy

- **Choline** is a part of the B-vitamin complex which supports and heals the liver, kidneys and gallbladder. Foods rich in choline include lecithin, egg yolk, liver, brewer's yeast and wheat germ. A daily supplement of at least 500mg can be taken along with a B-complex vitamin. Prolonged doses of choline alone can lead to a B₁₂ deficiency (Dunne 1990). Supplements containing picolinate should be avoided as they stress the kidneys.
- **Spring dandelion root tincture** is a foremost liver tonic that can be safely used throughout pregnancy. However, it may prove to be too stimulating if the liver has been severely compromised in the past. You can then try fall dandelion root, which is not as strong. If you still experience liver tenderness, switch to yellow dock or other milder therapies.
- **Eliminate drugs, alcohol, stimulants** (cigarettes, caffeine, white sugar, etc), and regular supermarket meats (these are loaded with antibiotics and hormones that are fed to the animals). Organic meat is best, followed by kosher or Islamic butchered meats, which are usually produced under stricter conditions.
- **Increase intake of** unrefined olive oil, fresh lemon juice, beets and dark greens. These gently support the liver.
- **Yellow dock root** (dosage and preparation as above for dandelion root) can be safely used if dandelion doesn't work for a particular woman. It is safe and an excellent iron tonic as well.
- **Decrease saturated fats** as needed for the individual.
- **Plain yogurt** can symptomatically relieve itching when massaged into the skin; or yogurt or oatmeal baths (tie a diaper full of oatmeal over the faucet as the water fills the tub, or get Aveeno bath obtained from the drug store). Yogurt baths are made by pouring a quart to one gallon of homemade yogurt into the tub and filling with water (homemade is recommended because it is cheaper). Cornstarch can also be used, 1 cup or more to a tub of water.
- **Avoid prescription vitamins and iron.** The dyes, coal-tar-derived synthetic vitamins, and hard-to-assimilate iron they contain make them worse than useless. Supplements should be considered as insurance, but cannot be depended upon to take the place of good eating habits. A natural vitamin from the health food store may be taken, if desired. Iron supplements that cause constipation should be discontinued immediately.