

## Tea for Two

by Demetria Clark

Nursing is one of the most powerful energy exchanges between two people. Mother and Child are connected at a deep soul level. Sometimes, though, busy lives, medicine, myths and measurements seem to sabotage efforts and undermine this powerful relationship. When a nursing mom is feeling run down, insecure or convinced she is not making enough milk, tea can help her lift her emotions, increase milk supply and make time for herself.

### Tea Time

Although teas can be mildly dehydrating, they are much less so than juices, sodas and coffee. "Water is the one essential element to life as we know it," says Susan Kleiner, PhD, RD, a nutritionist in Seattle and author of *Power Eating* (Human Kinetics, 1998). According to Kleiner, more than one-third of all Americans are chronically dehydrated.

But tea supplies the body with more than just liquid. Herbal teas can fortify and increase milk supply. All the herbs in the formulas written below are rich in vitamins, minerals, nutrients and taste. Keep in mind, though, that most healthy woman with low stress and functional lives do not need assistance. A woman's body already makes the world's best food for babies.

Tea time can also give mom a few minutes to drink in peace—and to breathe. It allows her to be creative with blending her own teas and finding the one she likes most.

### Basic preparations

An **infusion** is made by pouring simmered water over plant matter and allowing it to sit for at least 20 minutes. (It can sit overnight. As a rule, I allow four hours.) Infusions are made from flowers, leaves and soft stems.

A **decoction** is made by placing the plant matter in hot water and allowing it to simmer for 20 minutes. Harder stems, roots and barks are decocted.

A **part** is a base measurement. Depending on the desired quantity, a part is one tablespoon, teaspoon, cup, etc.

### The Formulas

#### Mama Milk

1 part blessed thistle (*Cnicus benedictus*), also known as mothermilk thistle. The herb contains B-complex vitamins, calcium, iron and manganese. Blessed thistle is also a traditional bitter used to aid digestion.

2 parts nettle (*Urtica dioica*). Nettles are one of the most widely applicable plants. They strengthen and support the whole body. Throughout Europe, they are used as a spring tonic and general detoxifying remedy. Rich in chlorophyll, iron and calcium, nettles increase breastmilk and energy.

2 parts red raspberry leaf (*Rubus idaeus*). Red raspberry leaf is rich in calcium, magnesium and iron.

1 part fennel seed (*Foeniculum vulgare*). Fennel seed increases the flow of milk.

¼ part fenugreek (*Trigonella foenum-graecum*). Fenugreek is an adjunct milk increaser. The chemical

components of fenugreek seed include iron, vitamin A, vitamin B<sub>1</sub>, vitamin C, phosphates, flavonoids, saponins, trigonelline and other alkaloids. This wonderful seed is also high in fiber and protein. Crush the fenugreek and fennel seeds. Mix ingredients and add 2 teaspoons to a cup of gently simmering water. Simmer for 10 minutes because of the leaf matter that is present.

### **Mama With a Cold Tea**

Sometimes, when mom isn't feeling great, she worries about milk production. This tea can help fortify her milk and treat her cold symptoms.

1 part rosehips. (Some varieties boast five to 10 times more vitamin C than an orange.) Rosehips are considered depression fighters.

1 part red raspberry leaf (*Rubus idaeus*)

1 part red clover (*Trifolium pratense*). Red clover contains isoflavins and bioflavonoids. It is considered a gentle blood cleanser.

Prepare as an infusion. Place 2 teaspoons dried plant matter in a cup and add 1 cup of hot water.

### **Mother Anxiety**

1 part motherwort (*Leonurus cardiaca*). Motherwort is great for stress and anxiety.

½ part peppermint (*Mentha piperita*). Peppermint is great for tension and nervousness.

1 part nettle (*Urtica dioica*)

Prepare as an infusion.

### **Milk Seed Tea**

These common seeds are used for milk production all over the world. They are flavorful, too.

1 part red raspberry leaf (*Rubus idaeus*)

½ part fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*)

½ part anise (*Pimpinella anisum*) (increases milk flow)

¼ part caraway (*Carum carvi*) (increases milk flow)

Crush seeds and mix with red raspberry leaf. Prepare as an infusion, because the seeds have a high volatile oil content, and you don't want to be overpowered.

Remember that education is essential. Herbs are real medicinals that can cause adverse effects if improperly used. Take the time to look it up, if you're not sure. Some great reference books are:

*Hygieia* by Jeannine Parvati Baker

*Wise Woman Herbal for the Childbearing Year* by Susun Weed

*The Holistic Herbal* by David Hoffmann

*The Complete Woman's Herbal* by Anne Mc Intyre

*A Woman's Book of Herbs* by Deb Soule

Originally printed at Breastfeed.com

Demetria Clark is the director of Heart of Herbs Herbal School in Vermont ([www.heartofherbs.com](http://www.heartofherbs.com)). She breastfed for over six years.