

World Breastfeeding Week: 6 Spices That May Help to Increase the Supply of Breast Milk Naturally

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Highlights

1. Breast milk is one of the healthiest forms of milk fed to the baby
2. It is known to be very healthy for infants as the colostrum
3. Herbs which promote milk flow in mothers are also known as galactogogues

The World Breastfeeding Week is an initiative to create more awareness about the benefits of breastfeeding during the first six months of the new-born's life. The benefits include supply of essential nutrients, protection from diseases and better growth and development. It is commemorated every year from 1st August 2017 to 7th August 2017 by WABA, WHO and UNICEF.

Breast milk is one of the healthiest forms of milk and the first food that is given to babies. It is known to be very healthy for infants as the colostrum (a yellow, watery pre-milk) that the breasts make during the initial stages after birth majorly help in the development and the over-all functioning of the digestive system of the new-born. Breast milk provides the perfect blend of nutrients for your infant. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends babies to be exclusively fed on breast milk from as early as an hour after birth to six months of age to achieve optimal growth, cognitive development and health.

Herbs which promote milk flow in mothers are also known as galactogogues and are a boon for those who are unable to produce enough milk for their infants. Insufficient milk production may be caused due to many reasons like insufficient glandular tissue,

hormonal changes, illnesses, or nutritional deficiencies. Ms. Anju Majeed, Director and Senior Scientist at Sami Labs, suggests some of most prominent spices or galactogogues that can come handy.

1. Fenugreek or Methi Seeds: Fenugreek is one of the oldest medicinal herbs. Methi seeds contain a compound called phytoestrogens that help in boosting the function of the mammary glands. Methi seeds should be soaked overnight, boiled and strained and had every morning to increase milk supply.

2. Cinnamon: Cinnamon helps to increase the flow of mother's milk. It will also help in delaying periods after childbirth. A pinch of cinnamon should be added to half a teaspoon of honey or to a glass of warm milk and consumed.

3. Shatavari: This traditional herb has been used to cure the problem of insufficient milk supply in nursing mothers for long. Shatavari contains steroidal saponins mainly shatavarins that helps to increase the production of milk.

4. Cumin: An integral part of Indian cuisine, cumin is a great remedy for stimulating milk production. These seeds are packed with iron, which is an essential mineral for nursing mothers. Cumin seeds also aid in digestion, stimulate bowel movements and provide relief against gastric problems. Cumin powder should be consumed with warm milk at bed time for best results.

5. Garlic: Garlic has been used since ancient times to aid in stimulating the milk glands and it helps in secretion of milk for a longer duration. This herb also enhances the flavour of the milk. Garlic has many health benefits and it is considered a safe and healthy addition to your breastfeeding diet.

6. Ginger: It is good to consume ginger during the lactation period. You cut few strips of fresh ginger root and boil it in water. Let it steep for two-three minutes and then strain and drink.

One must always check with the doctor before getting any kind of treatment done or before taking any medication during this sensitive period. Decreased milk production is one of the reasons why mothers tend to stop breastfeeding. It is best to stick to natural home remedies in order to deal with this problem.