Goat’s Rue (Galega officinalis L.)

**Clinical Indications:**
- Stomach irritant: expands ductile alveolar tissue.
- Diuretic: increases sweating – mammary tissue is a modified sweat gland.

**Safety:**
- Caution with diabetics: *galegin* affects blood sugar. Some feel the fresh plant may be toxic but not the dried plant.

**East Indian/Ayurvedic Traditions**

- Herbals to increase milk production
- Digestive tonics & estrogenic herbals
  - Shatavari, fenugreek, dill
- Herbals are used to cleanse the milk
- Herbs that flush toxins from a mother’s body by dilating blood vessels, stimulating kidneys and supports the liver: “guduci” AKA lotus stalk, ginger, dandelion

**Shatavari: Sanskrit/Indian Name**

- Asparagus / Shatavari: English/Common Name

  - **Clinical indications:** hormonal stimulation for low milk supply and mammogenesis
  - **Action:** Regulates hormonal secretion (prolactin)
  - **Galactagogue:** stimulates appetite, antispasmodic, cooling, toning and aphrodisiac properties
  - **Suggested Dosing:**
    - Capsules: 1-2 500 mg caps before meals 2X / day
    - Root Powder: 1-2 tsp in warm milk 1-2 X day
  - **Side effects:** breast tenderness, breast enlargement, increased vaginal fluid & sex drive

**Increased mammary tissue weight**

- Increase milk yield: estrogen–primed rats
- Inhibits involution of glandular tissue
- Maintained milk secretion

Sharma, S., Ranji S., Kumar, S, et. Al.
Randomized controlled trial of *Asparagus racemosus* (Shatavari) as a lactagogue in lactational inadequacy. Indian Pediatr 1996;33:678-7

Mothers using Shatavari, had a greater decrease in supplemental milk for their babies at end of this study as opposed to the placebo controlled mothers.
Professional Ethical Considerations of Herbal Galactagogues,

Alcohol extract of Shatavari caused an increase in serum prolactin levels


Latin:
- México,
- Guatemala,
- Belise,
- El Salvador,
- Honduras,
- Costa Rica,
- Caribe,
- Colombia,
- Cuba

Oats: Oatmeal gruel/beverage
- Alfalfa: leaves brewed as tea
- Fenugreek: seeds brewed as tea
- Ixbut “Baja Leche”

Ixbut (Mayan name)

Euphorbia lancerifolia
(Guatemala)

Euphorbia hirta
(India)

- Animal studies show increase of prolactin levels
- May cause nausea and vomiting
- Only anecdotal evidence by thousands of happy mothers
- No clinical studies

Fenugreek

Clinical indications:
Nutritive: High in mucilage, dietary fiber, volatile oils, vitamins. A, B, C, Ca, Fe, protein. Food source in India, C. America, Africa, Egypt, Arabia

Safety: (Seeds) (L3)
Side Effects: Inhalation powder may exacerbate asthma, high doses may cause hypoglycemia, diabetics to use caution. Allergies to legumes (See Nursing Mothers Herbals, Humphreys, 2003)

Suggested Dosage:
Tincture 2-4 ml, 2-3 X day
Capsules: Begin: 1 gram/day. Increase until smell of maple syrup. Begin with 1 cap X3 day prevents diarrhea or stomach upset. Increase to 3 caps X 3 Day, (no effect for dosages < 6 caps/day
Tea: 1-3 teaspoons (4.5-13.5 gms) whole seeds in 8 oz water, steeped 5-10+ minutes. Drink 2-4 X day
Tinctures: 3 ml X 3 day (Turner)
3-4 drops/ 10 lbs body weight q o hour until supply increases then reduce to every 3-4 hours (Higgins)

Fenugreek Study,
(Swafford S, Berens P 2000)

- Study: 10 women w/ infants of 24-38 weeks (mean 29 weeks) (non-placebo controlled)
- 3 fenugreek caps: 3X daily (Natures Way) for a week.
- Average milk production significantly from a mean of 207 mL/day to 464 mL/day ~doubling the milk volume in 1 week.
- No untoward effects reported.
Professional Ethical Considerations of Herbal Galactagogues,

**Gunnera perpensa**

*Gunneraceae*

Medicinal plant used by Zulu traditional healers to induce labor...

Decoctions are used to:
- Expel the placenta after birth,
- Relieve menstrual pains
- Stimulate milk production

**Gunnarea perpensa**

**Phytochemical screening:**
alkaloids, flavonoids, steroids, saponins, tannins and glycosides.

**Gunnera perpensa**

Stimulates milk production by causing alveolar development & causes myoepithelial cell contraction to increase milk ejection

Regarded as non-toxic (Veale et al, 1989)

**Personal Commitment**

I encourage you to take professional ethics and integrity as matters to heart and to use the Principles of Responsibilities to help guide you.

The health and well being of breastfeeding mothers and infants are in your hands.

**References**

- http://www.birthandbreastfeeding.com/galactagogues