

Making Herbal Teas for Babies

Herbal teas can be made from fresh or dried herbs, or from herbal tea bags. While older children can be given herbal teas as a nourishing part of their regular diet, for babies consumption of milk has to be key so we usually only give herbal tea in small dosages when a baby is ill e.g. has a cold. We don't use it to replace feeds of milk because milk is of course essential for growth at this stage.

Safety

If your baby is younger than 6 months and appears to be unwell then I recommend contacting your GP or medical professional first to get a diagnosis, before trying to administer any herbal treatment. If your baby is over 6 months and you have any doubts or concerns about what might be wrong, then again, please see your GP.

Baby-Friendly Herbs

Gentle herbs, often with a pleasant taste tend to be more suitable and often all that is required to help a baby.

Some of the herbs that we will look at in terms of various ailments that can be made into really good herbal teas are:

Chamomile, Lime flower, Meadowsweet, Lemon Balm, Cinnamon, Mint, Carrageen/Irish Moss seaweed, Rose, Marshmallow, Thyme, Rosemary, Calendula, Plantain, Nettle, Cleavers, Red Clover, Elderflower and many more.

How strong to make it? How much to give your baby?

For babies, herbal teas are made to a much weaker strength than for other age ranges.

A General Guide to Making Infusions per Cup:

- * Infuse 1/4 tsp (1-2g) dried herb or 1/2 tsp (3g) fresh herb in 1 cup (150ml) boiled water 10 mins.
- * Strain off the herbs (put the herbs on the compost) and save the liquid (this is the tea).
- * Allow the tea to cool to a suitable temperature.
- * Pour the liquid into a cup or mug (this is the infusion that you are going to give to the baby).

Ways to Administer Herbal Tea to a Baby

- * **Via breast milk:** A breast-feeding mum can drink an herbal tea at adult strength and the baby will benefit from the medicinal herbs, safely diluted through the breast milk. Easy-peasy and treating two people for the price of one!
- * **Mixed into the bottle feed:** Add a teaspoon (5ml) of the herbal tea infusion into the bottle of milk.
- * **Added to the beaker:** Suitable for older babies, add a 1 teaspoon (5ml) of the herbal tea infusion into the beaker of your child's drink. Let your child sip freely (the child doesn't need to finish the beakerful).
- * **From a spoon:** An older baby who has started to eat solids and is familiar with using a spoon will often take herbal tea straight from the spoon. Give the baby 5 ml of herbal tea this way.
- * **Using an oral dosage syringe:** For a younger baby or a baby that is a bit more fussy or reluctant to try things, try using one of these syringes to gently squirt the herbal tea into your baby's mouth. A max of 5 ml, and do it gently, 1 ml at a time. We don't want to drown or choke your baby! That for sure will put him/her off herbal medicine!

Shelf-Life

Herbal teas are made with water and don't contain a preservative. For these reasons we need to use them before harmful levels of bacteria grow in them. Usually, herbal tea is safe to drink up to 24 hours after it has been brewed BUT babies are new human beings on planet earth and are much more susceptible and vulnerable to germs. For this reason I recommend making up a fresh batch of tea every time you want to give your baby a dose of the herbs.

Herbal Teas in the Bath

Herbal teas can also be administered via the skin in the bath. We will look at this in detail when we look at HERBAL BATHS.



