



University of Connecticut
Health Center
John Dempsey Hospital
NICU/Newborn Nursery

Fenugreek (*Trigonella foenum-gracum*)

Fenugreek seed has been used by lactating women for many years to improve low milk supply, though the use of fenugreek for this purpose has not been well studied, and fenugreek does not improve milk supply in all cases.

As with any medication or herbal or vitamin supplement, taking fenugreek is a personal decision. You may want to consult with your medical provider before taking Fenugreek.

Recommended Usage

Day 1: Take 1 capsule (600 mg capsules) three times a day with food.

Day 2: If you are not experiencing stomach cramping or diarrhea, increase to 2 capsules 3 times a day with food (otherwise, stay with 1 capsule for another day and try to increase the next day).

Day 3: Increase to 3 capsules 3 times a day with food if tolerated.

If tolerated, you should plan on taking 3 capsules 3 times a day for at least 2 weeks.

Rare but Possible Side Effects

- Stomaching cramping, diarrhea – most likely side effect
- Maple syrup-like odor from the substance sotolone that is contained in the fenugreek seed. This is harmless and may be detected in breastmilk or on the mother's skin.
- Light-headedness and lowered blood pressure
- Decrease in blood sugar level – this is why it is recommended to take with food
- **Fenugreek can be a skin allergen and in a powder form, if inhaled, can cause asthmatic symptoms. Powdered seed forms of fenugreek should be avoided by mothers that are allergy prone and or have asthma.**

Additional Information

Fenugreek alone will not improve your milk supply. The most important part of maintaining a good milk supply is on-going, regular, milk removal by pain-free breast pumping and or breastfeeding.

It is suggested that you keep a milk pumping log while taking fenugreek to help you to know if your milk supply is improving.

Reference: Hale, T W. and Hartmann, PE. *Textbook of Human Lactation*. 1st Ed. Amarillo, TX: Hale Publishing; 2007