

The Amazing Alfalfa Plant

The Amazing Alfalfa Plant, a little of what it can do, for you and your clients Alfalfa tablets are a little known, very inexpensive, nutritional supplement that has been of great benefit to my clients and myself for over 27 years.

The roots of the alfalfa plant have been measured to descend over 8'5 feet down into the earth, bringing up many nutrients and micro-nutrients in concentrated amounts (especially when compared with most other food sources). They are very high in both iron and calcium (without interfering with one another as they do in regular vitamin/mineral supplements) as well as Vitamin C, Vitamin A, Vitamin E, Vitamin K and many trace minerals & micro nutrients.

Most pregnant woman don't get enough green veggies (do any of us?) Alfalfa tablets are an inexpensive, easily found, source of nutrients beneficial to almost anyone. They are also easily transportable for help with heartburn when eating away from home.

Many of pregnancy's discomforts are alleviated by the use of alfalfa tablets: morning sickness, heartburn, constipation and anemia (with its many complications). They raise the Vitamin K levels of pregnant women (reducing postpartum bleeding, both in quantity and duration). When the mother takes them during her pregnancy the Vitamin K stores are increased for her newborn (reducing the possibility of bleeding problems for the baby, and the need for the routine Vitamin K shot). They also support success in lactation because they help to increase milk supply. Alfalfa hay did the same for our goats when we had them, increased their milk production by 50%.

I have found that most pregnant clients stop taking the extra prenatal iron supplements that they are given for the normal mid-trimester red blood count drop. This form of iron supplement often makes them nauseated and/or constipated, so most clients stop taking them (if the truth were known). Recent studies have supported what we have all suspected, that the standard prenatal iron supplements have little to do with improvement in statistical outcomes. It appears that iron pills are still given out, more out of habit than reason. Alfalfa tablets help with nausea, constipation, and bring up the blood count in a more nutritionally sound way. They also help with swelling, whether it's the nutritional support that they provide, or an inherent quality of the alfalfa plant I do not know. I just know what I have seen them do for many people for years. Working in prenatal clinics with a mostly poor population, the women themselves are motivated to take alfalfies. They have usually heard from their friends about how much better they felt when they started taking them. It rarely takes much convincing on my part anymore.

Dosage: to avoid loose bowel movements that some clients get from too many at a time (if they have been on a typical US flow fiber) diet) I have them start slowly. I suggest that they take one the first day, and then two the second day, and so on, until they are taking two after each meal and two before bed. Women with excellent nutrition may not need as many; some with very poor nutritional stores will probably need more. This is the usual number that most women seem to need during pregnancy, in lactation often they can take less, again depending on other dietary intake, and past diet history (what has she eaten for the last few years?)

Over the years many of my clients have told me that the alfalfa tablets have helped them so much, in so many ways, that other family members started taking them too. I have been told that they have helped people with such diverse health complaints as: allergies, arthritis, acne, chronic fatigue, colitis, indigestion, bruising, mouth sores and vaginal infections. That I know of, no one has had any ill effects from them, only happy results. You should warn them, however, that their bowel movements will be much greener than they are used to. (Strange creatures we are, aren't we, that we pay such seriously close attention to such basic functions.)

A few contraindications to them are: they should be stopped temporarily if one gets a U.T.I., cut back on the number taken if one gets the "runs". I have postpartum Moms take a few right after the birth to help with blood loss and bowel movements. Then they should not take any more until about the fourth or fifth postpartum day, and gradually build back up to about 4-8 a day. The reason for this is two fold, the encouragement to lactation can be too much for comfort until engorgement subsides, and newborn jaundice will take much longer to go away. (The use of dairy products by the mother also increases the length of newborn jaundice in breastfed babies, because the hormones that are in the dairy feed come through both milks into the baby, delaying the bilirubin elimination. A delay of 5 days without dairy products is usually enough for the baby's system to catch up. There are also Homeopathic Remedies that help amazingly with newborn jaundice. The two used most often are Cheledonium or Chamomile depending on whether the baby is somewhat soft muscle tone, or tight & cranky.

A Note: some pregnant women find that they have a hard time getting the tablets down, they are so dry, and the smell of them can sometimes bother them. Tell them that they can take out a day's supply, and carefully grease the tops and bottoms of them with a tiny bit of butter or margarine (or Crisco, which has even less taste) on their index finger and thumb. Gently rub each tablet in between these greasy finger surfaces. The light oily surface will slide down easier, and the aroma will be diminished as well. You can't do many more than a day's worth at a time because they will fall apart in a day from this treatment. Some women have even crushed the tablets and filled empty gelatin capsules (available at Pharmacies & Health Food stores) to make them easier to swallow.

I realize that there may be women out there who have lots of different health problems; I feel that I need to point out for anyone that might not know. Since Alfalfa tablets are very high in Vitamin K they could be dangerous to take for anyone that needs to be on blood thinners like Heparin. Be aware that even PLANTS can have SIDE EFFECTS!

I usually order my Alfalfa tablets from Nutrition Headquarters (which has recently merged with Puritan's Pride) you can order with credit card (1-800-851-3551 CST, or www.Puritan.com) 1,000 of them is only \$5 (+ P&H). I have been told recently that alfalfa crops are some of the most highly sprayed crops grown, so it might be worth buying an organic brand. Be sure that there are no other ingredients in them, some have mint in them (which can antidote Homeos. and for most preggies makes their heartburn worse because it relaxes the esophageal sphincter- the opening from the esophagus to the stomach- so food backs up. Ugh!). A company called the Vitamin Shoppe makes some that have a thin coating on them, which makes them slide down much easier ... and therefore are less "aromatic" as well. They are about \$9 for 1,000 + P&H call 800-223-1216 EST, or www.vitaminshoppe.com to order them.

copyright 2000, Lisa Goldstein (permission to copy not needed if not for profit)