

## **Herbal Treatments**

Ideally, you will begin treatment at about 32 weeks, on confirmation of the presence of beta-strep in a vaginal culture, a urine sample that showed beta-strep, or a rectal sample. (Some doctors will do both a vaginal and rectal swab.) Treatment will include taking herbs orally that strengthen your immune system and applying herbs vaginally that will restore your healthy vaginal flora, that will enable your body to reduce bacterial overgrowth, and also that will directly fight the bacteria. As you enter the last few weeks of pregnancy, from 37 weeks onward (since your baby is unlikely to be premature), most midwives will be willing to assist you at home if this is your plan. In the hospital, your baby will also be considered close to full term and will not be treated as premature in most circumstances. At 37 weeks, you can therefore begin to use certain herbs both orally and vaginally that are sometimes considered labor stimulants, but are nonetheless effective for reducing bacterial infections.

At 32 weeks, begin to take a supplement of 500 mg of vitamin C, and 1 cup of burdock root and echinacea root infusion. To prepare the infusion, steep 1/2 ounce of each of these herbs in 4 cups of boiling water for 2 hours. Strain and take the above dose, storing the rest in the refrigerator for the next day.

Eat a lot of fresh garlic every day.

Take 1/2 teaspoon each of echinacea and astragalus tinctures twice daily. You can also get dried astragalus in the herb department of your health food store and cook two strips into a pot of rice or soup two to three times per week. Remove the strips when done cooking and eat the rice or soup. Astragalus is an immune system tonic well known in the Chinese pharmacopoeia, but also grows in America.

## **Garlic Remedies**

Chop a clove of fresh garlic and mix with a teaspoon of honey. Swallow this without chewing it. This can be done several times a day, preferably with a meal.

Make a garlic elixir by blending 1/2 cup of honey, 1/4 cup of apple cider vinegar, and half a bulb of fresh garlic in your blender until liquidy. Take 1/2 teaspoon up to twice a day. Adjust the taste as necessary with more or less of the honey or vinegar. Chop fresh garlic onto a salad, or mix with olive oil to use as a dressing or dip French bread into this as a condiment.

Take garlic perles according to the dosage on the brand you purchase.