



## Euphorbia

Revised: September 20, 2021.

## Drug Levels and Effects

### Summary of Use during Lactation

There are over 2000 species of *Euphorbia* containing numerous chemical compounds, although no specific active ingredients have been identified. Several *Euphorbia* species have been used as galactogogues in various cultures, such as *Euphorbia lancifolia* (called ixbut in the local language) by the Mayans in Guatemala,[1] *Euphorbia hirta* and *Euphorbia fusiformis* in India and Angola,[2-7] *Euphorbia serpyllifolia* and other species by American Indians and *Euphorbia thymifolia*. [5] No scientifically valid clinical trials support this use; however, some evidence in animals found that a *Euphorbia* extract increases serum prolactin.[8] Galactogogues should never replace evaluation and counseling on modifiable factors that affect milk production.[9,10] No data exist on the excretion of any components of *Euphorbia* into breastmilk. *Euphorbia* species exude a white sap, which is likely the reason for its use as a galactogogue via the “doctrine of signatures”. [5] The sap can cause contact sensitization and ocular toxicity if it gets in the eye. Taken orally, *Euphorbia* can cause nausea and vomiting.

Dietary supplements do not require extensive pre-marketing approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Manufacturers are responsible to ensure the safety, but do not need to *prove* the safety and effectiveness of dietary supplements before they are marketed. Dietary supplements may contain multiple ingredients, and differences are often found between labeled and actual ingredients or their amounts. A manufacturer may contract with an independent organization to verify the quality of a product or its ingredients, but that does *not* certify the safety or effectiveness of a product. Because of the above issues, clinical testing results on one product may not be applicable to other products. More detailed information [about dietary supplements](#) is available elsewhere on the LactMed Web site.

### Drug Levels

*Maternal Levels.* Relevant published information was not found as of the revision date.

*Infant Levels.* Relevant published information was not found as of the revision date.

### Effects in Breastfed Infants

Relevant published information was not found as of the revision date.

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## Effects on Lactation and Breastmilk

Animal studies have demonstrated an increase in serum prolactin after administration of an extract of *Euphorbia hirta* and *Euphorbia fusiformis*.<sup>[7,8]</sup>

## References

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## Substance Identification

### Substance Name

Euphorbia

### Scientific Name

Euphorbia sp.

### Drug Class

Breast Feeding

Lactation

Complementary Therapies

Phytotherapy

Plants, Medicinal