Spoil Your Baby Ep 28 - Herbs Aren’t Scary, They’re a Lifeline with Sara Chana Silverstein Transcript

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Introduction and Sarah Khannau2019s Background

Nine and three quarters out of 10 times when a woman says she has low milk or her baby's not doing well, we train the baby greer. This is not popular.

I don't know why. Hello, everyone. Welcome to Spoil Your Baby podcast. I am so happy to be here today with Sarah Khanna. She has so much wonderful expertise for us as a very experienced doula, lactation consultant, and master herbalist as well.

Thank you, Greer, and also mother of seven. I have five boys and two girls. So when I teach, I try not to speak about my personal experience, more my clinical, but just let everybody know I've had lots of sleepless nights, feeling overwhelmed, being rushed and challenged, so I'm with everyone out there.

Yeah, we love the personal experience here. You bring it all, bring at all. But we know you have so much clinical experience as well, too, for us to learn from, which is so amazing.

I love it. So let's talk about, you know, supporting moms through pregnancy, birth, lactation, postpartum, and how some of your expertise can help out with that.

So I'd like your audience to know besides being a mother of seven, I'm an international board certified lactation consultant. And for over three decades I've helped over 45,000 mothers and babies breastfeed.

I am also a master herbalist and a classical homeopath, which means we study anatomy, physiology, disease process, childhood development, And we, in my training, do botanical plant-based medicine as opposed to pharmaceutical.

Now, before we begin, I always say, Greer, that if someone needs an antibiotic or a steroid or an inhaler we are not against conventional medicine. Most really trained herbalists know that these are also fantastic tools.

What we try to do is find plant-based options first, because there are really little to no side effects ever. If your child's having an asthma attack, you go for your ulbuterol and steroids for sure.

But then in the recovery stage, Western medicine doesn't have a lot to offer, but herbs do because we've had spasm of the lungs and the bronchi, and we can really soothe that experience down and then prevent another one.

So I kind of straddle both fences. And I think that's really important for your listeners to know. Absolutely. I love to hear that. Western medicine doesn't have much for promoting our health and preventative health either, right?

And so that is where this can really help support us being well in so many ways. Even when I have a woman that hemorrhages postpartum, Thank God you're in a hospital.

Holistic Care Across Pregnancy and Postpartum

I'd rather you be in hospital than in the backwoods. But then after that woman hemorrhage, the sad thing is doctors don't say, well, what do we do to prevent it next time?

And why did this woman haemorrhaage? and literally they go to their six week postpartum as if nothing happened. And even during pregnancies, women can be very low in iron.

It's very common in America to have low iron, so the second these women give birth, they're like, okay, I'm done with my iron I'm like, wow, how could you have recovered?

Like three weeks ago, you were very anemic. Now you gave birth. So this is kind of the problem that we have that women in between pregnancies don't prep for their next pregnancy.

After they finish a pregnancy, there's not a healing protocol for what they experienced during their pregnancy or their birth. And that's what an lactation consultant doula like myself and herbalist, it's the whole picture.

Let's look at everything. Look at your behaviors before getting pregnant, during pregnant after, and let's create an environment that you can be the healthiest, that the mom can be.

And that's different career for everybody. Some people struggle with weight, some people are pre-diabetic, Some women don't have a lot of strength, but we have to aim for the optimum health for that person.

Individualized care. Yeah, completely. Even the example of iron that you gave, right, we see that come up in so many ways. I had low iron during my pregnancy, I used herbs to support myself.

We see even showing up postpartum for moms and babies, and that affects their sleep, it affects the energy, affects so much different things, just as one nutrient, so important.

And it's like our OBs can give us great care during the pregnancy, but we're kind of dropped. And really, so interesting. I was invited, and I don't know that this is still the protocol, I had too many kids, seven kids to go speak and teach in China and then the Philippines.

The Philippines had established this, again I'm not sure if it is here today, that the first six weeks postpartum, they had a woman come in every day to take care of the mother, every data to care the baby.

Massages were available for the Mother and the Baby. And they found that when they focused in on these six week post partum for mother and baby, that they spent much less money on care throughout the next two years.

That is just not part of our American culture at all, which it should be. Absolutely, absolutely. So let's talk about all the stages and how we can support mothers.

Let's Talk about pregnancy first. What are some things that people can do to support themselves? So I'm an herbalist. That means that I teach people how to safely use herbs.

You and I were discussing before the show that People are afraid of herbs, I remember when I was pregnant, there was like, it was hard to even tell what tea I could have, right?

Like it's like can I have chamomile? Can I mint teas? What can have? And I really was lucky. I had the support of a lot of doula friends. It was a doule at the time, the big community.

And my friends would blend me beautiful teas that were high in iron and other minerals and important things. But I did also have to get through that hurdle of fear because You know, it's hard to get that information.

So in our materia medica, which is like the physician desk reference of pharmaceuticals. Onions and garlic are considered an herb. So when you're making a chicken soup, I've never heard in 32 years of practice, someone's like, you know, i only put in two onions, not four, because I wanted to limit my herbal intake of of onions.

Right.

Herbs for Pregnancy: Nettles, Skullcap, and Safety

Or, You know what, the recipe called for five cloves of garlic, So onions and garlic are considered herbs. You can

have as much parsley as you want during your pregnancy.

It can slow down your milk, by the way, postpartum. Sage and parsley are two herbs you can use, but in moderation. But in pregnancy, you could have cilantro, dill, parsley, all these herbs that we're not afraid of.

Then we get a little skeptical when we talk about the other herbs, which are the same plant. So for instance, the herb nettles, nettle plant. It's one of the hi and trace minerals and vi tea is you're not going t you know, like how many c you drink a day to maybe You can remember on a Monday, Tuesday, forget on Wednesday, Thursday, do it again on Saturday and Sunday.

Meaning if you take an antibiotic, you're supposed to take it for seven to 10 days straight. And if. You're not necessarily supposed. To retake it with herbs.

Oh my gosh, You. Can take. It for a week. Forget for. A week and what it does is it replenishes your body. So nettles is fantastic during pregnancy. I want to jump to an herb called skull cap.

So the way I use herbs is I find that my American clients don't drink herb tea as much as in India or England or other places in the world. I tend to use what is called the tincture.

A tincture is a liquid form of the herbs and I'm going to explain it. You take an herb like here I have the herb rose which is for sadness and grief and you pour grain alcohol over it into a glass jar and let it sit for six to eight weeks then you strain it and you get an herb called a tincture.

The reason I suggest for women and pregnant women, it is in a grain alcohol base. So you don't want to drink a lot of alcohol when you're pregnant. We're talking 35 drops or you can get a necklace, right?

And you quickly, efficiently. So I'm showing right here a shot glass. And you can take the tincture, put in 35 drops, add a little grape juice, take a quick, quick shot of it, boom, and go your merry way.

With tea, if you're a tea drinker, it's fantastic, but it is much more of a production. Whereas tingture is quick and efficient. Skullcap, which I started, is for nervous anxiety.

So I'm sure not many of your listeners out there haven't heard of anxiety during this time. I always had nervousness and anxiety, especially because I have.

Five boys in a row and when they would come home from school at four o'clock, you gotta know I would down my skull cap. They'd be punching each other, beating each another up.

I'd like, am I a terrible parent? And then they'd put their arms around each and walk into the other room. It was just a boy thing, right? So skullcap can take the edge off of anxiety.

It's in the mint family safe while pregnant, safe, while breastfeeding. And I don't know why every single woman in You have PTA, you're anxious, You can't fall asleep.

You take skull cap. you know you are going to be stuck in traffic. Your going into the orthodontist, to the dentist, your kids getting a cavity. Oh my God.

Like I can think of many reasons why you don't need skullcap. Easy. Inexpensive. Get it in a tincture or a tea. Take, again we can not diagnose or treat here, but 25 to 35 drops diluted three times a day.

It doesn't make you sleepy greer. And it just takes the edge off life's challenges. I love it, I'm gonna get some myself. I've been growing some herbs myself, and I have metal growing in my garden right now and a bunch of other different herbs as well, so I kind of have the hobby bit going, but I am not getting too ambitious about how much I will get.

So I also buy things aswell, that's exciting. Sure, people say that herbs are not regulated and we are going back to the fears. So I'm going to mention two companies.

Again, I am not representing anything Greer. I really just here to educate. Yeah, no, it's good for us to know. There's a company called Herbalist and Alchemist, and a comedy called herb farm and wish garden herbs.

Those are the three most available. Cool. People from the FDA are in there all the time, making sure the plant is clean and organized, which it is.

Postpartum Mood Support and Lactation Basics

Each of these companies check for lead, pesticides, and the most important thing is to make sure that the genus of the plants is correct. Because just because you're getting it from India or Japan, or in both those places, doesn't mean necessarily in the travel it didn't get mixed up.

So they check to be sure it's the plan. So when you buy herbs from these type of companies, they are cleaner than most of the food in our grocery stores.

Herbalists are very strict. They're not going to sell you a product unless it's top notch. So to fear this, really, you can call the company. Always make sure that there's a master herbalist like myself, I'm an HG American Herbalist Guild overseeing the product and then you are good to go.

I just want everyone to know there is really no fears and any of the poisonous or toxic herbs are not being sold on the market and they're not going to be sold from these companies because there are mushrooms that are poisonous.

There are plants that aren't poisonous, sure, but not the plants they are going sell to the public. They're just not. Amazing. So pregnancy, Nettle's great, skullcaps great.

Sounds like skull caps great for somebody's entire motherhood journey, which is wonderful. Valerian also, you know, in Russia, and Ukraine. Valerian was the top-sold herb.

It's safe while pregnancy. With Valarian, some people are fabulous with it and some are not. I always want to say that. For people that do well with Valarian, it's also calming and soothing to the central nervous system for anxiety and stress.

Some people will get a little agitated, don't ever take the herb again. But nine out of ten people not sedated and it can ta anxiety and skull cap and Wonderful.

But my favorite are postpartum. And I feel there should be an IV on every corner in the world. You're having a hard day. Takes, you don't take it to the IV, I'm kidding.

you take Motherwort. Motherwart is for gloominess and sadness. When everything's okay, Greer, but you see that black cloud descending, and you're like, no, don' ever take me.

And you're dark, you are gloomy, your sad, You're sitting with a baby that's healthy. You are sitting a with baby you love and you like can't stop crying.

That's mother work. Motherwort takes the edge off of gloominess. It allows you to push away that black cloud, totally safe while postpartum and breastfeeding.

They say it's not the top choice for pregnancy. I don't feel it is dangerous, but there are so many other herbs. But post partum greer, skull cap for anxiety mixed with motherwort for sadness, you got the best thing going.

I love it. That's so helpful for everyone listening. Amazing. Any tips for lactation? What are some good herbs that

will help lactate? So when we're doing lactations, we are never giving herbs to build the milk or change the quality of the breast milk.

Basically, breast milk under a microscope looks exactly the same. Whether you're eating Indian food or food from Japan or anywhere doesn't matter. As long as you are eating protein three times a day and vegetables occasionally have fruit and are lowering your grains but having them to stay full.

you're treating the person. So if the woman was a little low thyroid during her pregnancy, but she didn't need medicine, you could take an herb called ashwagandha, which is a very popular herb from India, Ayurvedic medicine.

And that is like food for the thyroid. If a woman has a postpartum sinus infection and she doesn't want to take antibiotics because you can get a yeast infection, she can make an herb called Yerba Santa.

So when women are breastfeeding, I'm not treating the milk. I'm treating the woman. So there's a lot of products out there. Oh my God, more milk, enrich your milk.

No, you don't need to enrich milk you need the mothers keep it together so she can nurse on demand, have patients for her baby, but her breast milk is fine.

I don' know if I'd love you to go to McDonald's three times a day, right? you know, try to eat healthy, pure food as much as you can. But your milk is fine, Greer, fine.

Yeah, your body will take all the best of the nutrients you have for your milk and we're giving them other nutrients, right, and replenishing her postpartum.

So if anybody out there didn't breastfeed, don't feel bad. I was telling Grear before the interview that I also help babies bottle feed properly. Here's the thing.

Nine and three quarters out of 10 times when a woman says she has low milk or her baby's not doing well, we train the baby greer. This is not popular.

I don't know why. Baby signs can be low tone, have an inability to coordinate, suck, swallow, breathe. They may be a little lackadaisical on the breast.

So 99 and 3 quarters percent of the time we in my office are working on training the Baby to get the strength of breastfeed. We rarely, rarely have to look at the mom unless her diet is horrible.

Training the Baby and Solving Breastfeeding Challenges

But I wanna just throw out that if you had a difficult experience with breastfeeding and want to breastfeed the next, you find a lactation consultant that's gonna work on training the baby to nurse.

Not part of our culture. Yeah, absolutely. When I was a doula, I had lactating consultant built into my plan so that every single person had somebody coming to their house to help them out because We need it.

We really do. Especially someone who's really, you know, conscious and, and holistic in their approach. Short nipples, long nipple, large areola, small areolas, larger breasts, smaller breasts.

Like, we don't really analyze them. But you can I will have a woman Greer that has a flat nipple. She had no idea because she never saw her friends nipples and she didn't have sisters.

she Didn't even know in the nine months of pregnancy, she doesn't know that she might need a nip or shield because her nipples are so flat. And she sits in my office going, why did anybody tell me?

I'm like, I don't no but they should have. So sometimes it's not even the baby and it is not the mother not trying. It's just the physical structure. And we have to work on that and we just have teach them what to do.

Pretty easy to fix. Absolutely, yeah. I've seen so many different cases because one of my really good friends is a lactation consultant. They're miraculous, right?

I think that she could get nearly anyone going with lactation. And so if someone's listening and they really are planning on breastfeeding or in that situation, finding a good person, there will be a solution.

We spend a lot of time, I don't know about your friend, but my consultations are 1.5 hours. Most of our doctors and even midwives were lucky to get six minutes with them.

When I work with a woman, Greer, it's like we're there an hour and a half. I always feel like I need more time. And my daughter, who's also an LC and works with me, is like, Ma, you have to shorten your your consultations.

Well, can't we double them? Because by the time I understand, Is the woman right handed or left handed? Is she coordinated or not? When it was so funny, I remember I was working with the women once and she went to latch on the baby and like she couldn't get the hole in one like it would be up on her chest.

she was the most uncoordinated person. So her husband was in the other room. I walked in there and said, you know, I don't mean to be rude, but did you ever notice like I have to help a little coordination?

He goes, i would never let my wife drive. She cannot play tennis and she is totally un-coordinating. And I didn't want to speak badly, But like he said you got to talk slowly to her and work on her coordination.

My next hour was just working on coordination. Nothing's wrong with her as a person. She's just not naturally coordinated. So how could she with a crying baby and a wiggling baby?

We wrapped up that baby so the baby's arms were not flying. I made sure she had a lot of pillows around her to support her. We had her sit up straight and not lean back because you don't have the strength.

And we really just focused in on how do we get that mouth onto the nipple. And she did it. She did, but she couldn't do it just like in a casual way, she would have never been able to be successful.

Yeah, absolutely, well, it's unbelievable that you've worked with over 45,000 babies involved. At the last count. Incredible, incredible. Everyone who's been with you is so lucky.

I love it. All right, let's talk about the next phase then. What about when our babies grow up a little bit? They're eating and consuming foods. Are there herbs that are safe for little kids?

Totally, and there's herbs So. Herbs have been around for thousands of years. And in cultures outside the US, integrating herbs into their children's lives are just normal.

It's completely normal, and we need to start normalizing it because we do have access to so many good quality herbs. So there's an herb called lemon balm, something where you can grow in your garden.

I love it. There you go. it's calming and soothing. It's a great herb to make into a tea and make it to ice popsicles. If the child, excuse me, over a year old, you can add a little honey and making these delicious ice pop.

if they're under a or some other kind of sweetener. And if a child has a fever and not wanting to drink, a fun little lemon balm ice pop is fantastic.

In the summer for hydration, you can make an herb called oats. It's the plant before oatmeal. You can get some oat tea, make it into ice cubes and add a little peppermint if you want.

If the kids like that, squeeze a lemon. put the ice cubes in thei them super, super hydrated ice pops also um get some you can mix it into a tea linden, which helps with and soothing.

You can mak ice pop for your kids bec tend to like to drink warm So elderberry is very high in vitamin C. Lemon balm is antiviral, calming, and soothing.

And catnip is fantastic for winter coughs. So you could give them a cat nip tincture. They have them in glyceride, which is delicious. You can add it to a little bit of grape juice.

Catnips, linden, lemon balm, oats, these are all completely safe for children. Of course, check with your doctor, although they're not educated in it.

And women have used them for just thousands of years, Greer.

Herbs for Children and Everyday Family Wellness

This is unusual to us, but common to the world around us. Yeah, it's amazing. I love getting deeper into the World of Verbs. project I take on will be in this field because it is incredible to be, you know, an active participant in your own health and your family's health, and to using these traditions that have been around for so long.

Well, one thing that's so fascinating to me is I live in Brooklyn, New York, the concrete jungle, to Herbs grow between the cracks of the concrete in the alleyways, in gutters, and no matter what happens with global weather change, the herbs grow the same time.

If we have a snowy winter or a warm winter, an early fall, a late fall and early spring, no I see the same plants coming up, herbal plants at this same time, Greer, and it's here for us all the time.

And I'm always shocked. I mean, I try not to harvest my herbs in Brooklyn. It's too polluted. But in an emergency, there are so many edible plants that grow.

Do I used to call them weed walks. Now I have to called them medicinal herb walks because my kids are like, You're not giving weed walks. No one's smoking weed.

I'm like, but I've not taught me about it. So it's medicinal plant walks and we walk like a three block radius in Brooklyn, three blocks, and you'll find 10 to 15 medicinal herbs.

It's kind of an interesting challenge for your listeners is they could just in their search bar, say edible plants around me. Now I am not saying go eat them.

it takes a while to identify. But it's so fun with a kid, even three, to show them the plants. I mean, my kids and grandkids love it, Greer, they love.

And we go down the street and I test them, what's the name of this plant? Is it edible? No, like daffodils are not edible, They're poisonous. So we're not eating daaffodil, but violets are completely edible.

I like my kid's and grandchildren to start to understand their surroundings around them. Why not? Oh yeah, My son absolutely loves plant identification.

He loves it. A fun way to do it is you can kind of make like a sticky clipboard and they can take the leaves and flowers and stick them on and make it a game that way too.

It's a really fun thing to. So fun. And we're on, we've spoken about so much. I just want your listeners to know that on my website, I have free handouts.

That's great. Natural first age kit for kids. and I I different downloadable sheets on edible plants. and plans for

emotional health for, and that's at sarahanna.com and Greer.

I wrote a book called Moodtopia, which is behind me. And it's about herbs for women's health, emotional, sadness, grief, feeling overwhelmed. This spring, I'm just starting to announce it.

where we talk about herbs specifically for the emotional health of kids, so we can demystify it, let people stop being afraid of herbs, and be familiar with what's available to their kids.

So I'm really excited about that. Incredible. I think it can be so intimidating. Having a really well-trusted place to consult is so important for families.

We're not selling products. When you're on Instagram, you can get a lot of great information, but a LOT of the bloggers have to be supported and they're supported by products.

When I talk about different products on my website, I'm not representing a brand, because I mean I could be foolish, Greer, But I don't, Because I really want people to understand how they can incorporate it into their own lives.

I am not selling anybody a product. That's really important to know. Wonderful. So if people want to find out more, sounds like you have tons of beautiful free resources on your website, we'll put your web site in the show notes.

And you also have an amazing offer for our listeners for another downloadable guide, is that right? For this show, we're going to put up a downloadable, something that you can print or keep on your desktop on herbs for kids specifically.

So they're so intimidating, like you said. I talk about four or five herbs that are safe for, I would say, all our kids. But if you have a kid with seasonal allergies or food allergies, for instance, chamomile is in the ragweed family.

So if you have a child with terrible seasonal allergies, chamomile, which we discussed before the show, is not the primary herb, but totally the mother that's breastfeeding can take it.

So chamOMile would not be the top herb but like an herb called echinacea is. I'm going to have that handout for your listeners so they can just have an easy guide to go to and it's free.

Amazing. Well, thank you so, so much for being with us and bringing us into the world of herbs and lactation and all of these wonderful areas. I really appreciate it.

And if I could mention, if you don't mind on Instagram, and I'm not in my twenties, but I do have an Instagram account. It's at Sarah Hanna s s a r a.

I put up tons of one minute videos on the plants and how to use them. So it's a real quick reference guide and you can see the plans, what they look like, how they use, them really quick and simple and I feel very informative.

I love it. And I'm going to follow you right away and we'll put that in our notes as well. Thank you so much, Sarah.