OBJECTIVE: To review the efficacy and safety of specific herbal medications that have been used traditionally to treat common conditions in women. DATA SOURCES: Current literature, with emphasis on more rigorously controlled studies. DATA SYNTHESIS: Herbal medicines have long been used in traditional healing systems to treat conditions of particular interest to women, such as premenstrual syndrome (PMS) and menopausal symptoms. For a select number of phytomedicines, including evening primrose oil, black cohosh root extract, dong quai, and chastetree berry, scientific investigation is elucidating the pharmacologically active constituents, mechanism of action, and clinical value. CONCLUSION: Based on the available evidence, evening primrose oil and chastetree berry may be reasonable treatment alternatives for some patients with PMS. Dong quai may have some efficacy for PMS when used in traditional Chinese multiple-herb formulas. For relief of menopausal symptoms, black cohosh root extract and dong quai have good safety profiles, but only black cohosh has demonstrated efficacy for this indication. Safety data, especially during pregnancy and lactation, are still largely lacking for many herbal medications, and recommendations for usage and dosage vary. Pharmacists who wish to recommend herbal products for women’s health conditions need to evaluate the scientific literature in order to form their own opinions about appropriate use and safety.