

POSTPARTUM AND NEW MOM RESOURCES & TIPS

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Caring for your health during the postpartum period:

General Health:

The postpartum period is a time to keep yourself as rested and stress-free as possible. In order to avoid postpartum depression and build your energy back up you will need to take care of yourself, but taking care of a baby is a lot of work so it can be difficult. You will hear the same advice repeatedly: sleep when the baby sleeps (not always so easy, though!) and let other people help you out at home (especially if you have guests – ask them to help you out, rather than trying to host them, and keep the visits brief). Basically, listen to your body and what you feel up for and try to honor your needs.

One traditional Chinese medicine remedy to consider is placenta encapsulation. This may sound strange, but if you can get your placenta encapsulated and take it as a daily supplement in the 4–8 weeks following your labor and delivery, it can dramatically help you gain your energy back, prevent/reduce postpartum depression, and also help with lactation. This is something you would plan ahead before your birth – contact a local midwife about their availability so they can come pick up the placenta at your birth place once your baby has been born. Here are a few local midwives who can do this for you:

Kira Kim – www.Northshorebirthservices.com

Lauren Olson Sidford – olfords@comcast.net

Tammy Wills – www.justalittlesweetness.com

Breastfeeding:

If you are breastfeeding, ample milk production requires you to be very well hydrated and rested. The more tired and dehydrated you are, the lower your milk supply will be. Breastfeeding also requires you to consume more calories than you needed before or during your pregnancy. You may find that you are hungrier than ever before. Breastfeeding helps to reduce weight gained from pregnancy, so eat well and give your body what it needs. You might want to strategically place some healthy snacks and water bottles all around your home so when you get stuck breastfeeding somewhere you have water and a snack within reach. Also, if you are finding your milk supply to be low, there are many remedies that may help. Fenugreek is a supplement that increases milk production and can be found at health food stores. There are also herbal teas for lactation. Galactagogues are foods that help increase milk supply. These include oatmeal (whole rolled oats or steel cut oats – not the instant or quick kind) and brewers yeast (you can look up recipes for lactation cookies using oats and brewers yeast if that interests you). Some people think beer helps, although it can be dehydrating and alcohol does enter breast milk so you would want to drink in moderation. Plugged milk ducts can also be an issue – this can manifest with a tender lump in your breast. Sometimes these can become infected and cause mastitis, which can manifest with flu-like symptoms. To treat a plugged duct and prevent it from turning into mastitis you can use a heating pad locally, massage the area and take soy lecithin supplements (available at a health food store; more info can be found about treating this condition and soy lecithin dosages at kellymom.com). If you find this to be a recurring issue then you can use soy lecithin as a preventative treatment.

Nutrition:

Eating well is important for your energy and health. If possible, cook and freeze meals in advance or purchase and stock up on healthy meals so that you can simply defrost and re-heat them. You may also want to find ways to cook that don't take much time and labor (i.e. using a slow cooker, a rice cooker, buying chopped vegetables, etc.). This way you can prepare meals quickly and eat well. If you want some more specific tips about what to eat according to Chinese medicine, you can check out our diet and lifestyle suggestions handout. During the postpartum period it's recommended to follow a combination of the suggestions for the Deficient Spleen Qi pattern and Blood Deficiency pattern.

(See back for more)

Local & Online Resources for Support:

SomervilleMoms (all one word) group on Yahoo.com – you do NOT have to be a Somerville resident to join. Lots of information, advice and baby items for cheap/free. You may want to join before your baby is born so you can gather some items, read information and ask questions.

FREE local drop-in new moms groups– hosted by Jewish Family and Children's Services (JF&CS) – the groups are non-denominational/non-religious and run by a social worker. You can attend whenever you want to, and there's a list of days/times/locations for them on the JF&CS website:
<http://www.jfcsboston.org/NewsEvents/ViewArticle/tabid/260/smid/722/ArticleID/58/reftab/285/t/New-Mothers-Support-Groups/Default.aspx>

Kellymom.com – a website for evidence-based information about breastfeeding, sleep and parenting.

FREE Lactation Support drop-in groups open to everyone (not just patients at these hospitals):

Cambridge Hospital Lactation Drop-in Group – located at 8 Camelia Avenue, Cambridge (building next door to the birth center house and across from the hospital) on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 am to noon. They also have a pumping class once a month.

Melrose-Wakefield Hospital Baby Café – The Church of the Nazarene, 2 Short Street, Melrose Weds 5:30 – 7:30 pm; Fri 10am to 12 noon.

Books:

Breastfeeding Made Simple: Seven Natural Laws for Working Mothers by Nancy Mohrbacher IBCLC FILCA, Kathleen Kendall-Tackett PhD IBCLC and Jack Newman MD.

The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding by Diane Wiessinger, Diana West and Teresa Pitman