



Nurturing the New Mother

IN THE FOURTH TRIMESTER

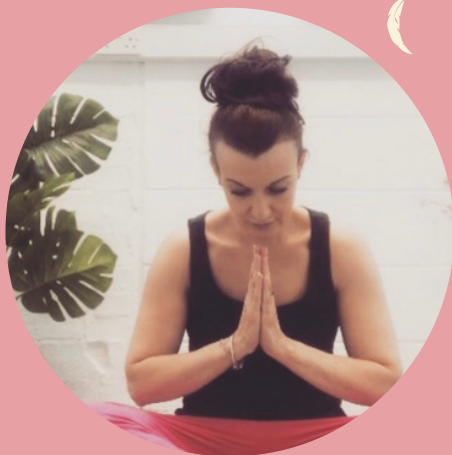
Written by
SARAH LOUISE MCCALLUM

Hey beautiful mama, congratulations on your new baby!

I'm Sarah, yoga teacher and women's wellness coach. I am the creator 'Balanced Mamas' - Pregnancy and Postnatal Yoga and Wellbeing and host of 'The Balanced Birth Podcast'.

I was introduced to yoga in my own pregnancy over 20 years ago and found it to be such an incredible tool in helping support me mentally as well as physically both during my pregnancy and into motherhood too. The breathing techniques I learnt in pregnancy yoga didn't just help me during birth but became a vital tool in helping me navigate my postnatal journey as well as helping to heal my post birth body too.

I am hugely passionate about supporting mothers in the early days and weeks of motherhood (The Fourth Trimester), when you are navigating life with your new baby and also trying to balance hormones and lack of sleep.



I hope this book can help to guide you with some tips and techniques to support both your physical and mental post-birth wellbeing, from tips on breath work, scare recovery, pelvic floor and core recovery, nutrition and more.

Sarah x

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a light-colored long-sleeved shirt and beige pants, is holding a baby up in the air with both hands. The baby is wearing a white onesie and is smiling and pointing its right index finger. The background is a bright, out-of-focus window with white curtains. Several dark brown feathers are floating in the air around the baby. The text "Self-care strategies to help you have a healthy post birth recovery." is overlaid on the lower left side of the image in a dark brown, serif font.

Self-care strategies to
help you have a healthy
post birth recovery.

Nurturing The New Mother

Most women leave hospital with little information on postnatal care and can feel quite overwhelmed with being left to simply get on with it. It seems completely crazy to me that we spend so much time and effort into preparing for birth itself and then barely anything beyond that. We no longer have the same support as we had a few generations ago where you had your mum, aunts, nan and often neighbours supporting the new mother in those early days, so planning ahead is so very important.

Often family isn't close by to give support new mums like they used to (or simply grandparents are still working themselves) and so the new mother is thrown quickly into nursing a new baby alone, who needs feeding, changing and nurturing constantly, on top of having the demands of a household to run with cooking, cleaning and washing - all while her body is still recovering.

A women's body goes through immense changes to accommodate her growing baby and giving birth is both physically and mentally demanding on her, leaving her nutritionally depleted and in need of replenishment. The physical recovery, a change in hormones and building a milk supply, whilst thrown quickly back into the pressures of everyday life can become very overwhelming, it is no surprise new mums end up exhausted and suffering baby blues. This is a time where the mother needs to be recuperating, not juggling everything else. Let's be honest the early days and weeks of motherhood can be challenging, you are trying to get to know your baby and their cues, you may be learning how to master breast feeding and living on little sleep, all while tackling a handful of post birth symptoms. This surely is enough for any new mum.





If we take a look at many Eastern cultures, the postnatal period is a time devoted to healing and nurturing the mother, keeping her rested, warm and fed. Family, friends and neighbours surround her to help care for both mum and her new baby during the first 40 days of motherhood – the fourth trimester. Helping the mother to feel supported within her period of transition into motherhood. Cooking her healing and nourishing foods, taking over the cleaning and washing duties as well as helping nurse the baby. It is a time for 'bringing warmth' to the mother and it is easy to understand the wisdom behind this. Did you know a women's blood volume almost doubles in pregnancy to support her growing baby, and after giving birth a mother loses much of this blood volume that helped keep her baby warm, hence losing warmth herself! A mother requires warming and nourishing foods, slowly cooked and easy to digest in the days after birth. Digestion is one of the body's main ways for detoxification, so as the body repairs, recycles water, and flushes out pregnancy hormones, smooth and easy digestion is important.

Mostly in western cultures as I already mentioned, new mums do not have a huge network of family members and friends available to serve continued hot meals or to let her rest and retreat fully. That doesn't mean a new mum 'cannot' be looked after and build a circle of support though. We do not need to feel guilt for taking time to recover, you take roughly 40 weeks to carry your baby inside of you and so I encouraged you to take the 40 days to rest. I hope this book can help guide you into creating your own fourth trimester care plan and help you to heal and nourish your body with some handy tips and recipes.

Feelings After Birth

Your hormones change pretty quickly after you give birth, progesterone and estrogen decrease as soon as your baby and the placenta are delivered, while there will be a surge in oxytocin as well as prolactin to help you produce breast milk. These wildly swinging hormones are to blame for the crazy emotions known as 'baby blues' that you experience in those days and weeks post birth. It is completely normal to feel any number of emotions ranging from relief and joy to anxiety and sheer exhaustion as you tackle a lack of sleep on top of those raging hormones. Your emotions should begin to settle down a bit around 3 - 6 weeks. At around 6 months your hormones should regulate to pre pregnancy.

It is a tricky time mentally and physically and so it is important to take time for your well-being and rest in these early post-birth days. Get rid of any feelings that self-care is selfish, because it's not, it's necessary. I really cannot emphasise the importance this has on your postnatal recovery both mentally and physically. It can be tricky to take time for yourself with a new baby, so incorporating micro moments into your day may feel more achievable.

Even small things such as finding time to listen to a short meditation will benefit your wellbeing.

- o Take 5 minutes a day to be still with your baby and connect with your breath

- o Listen to a short, guided meditation

- o Treat yourself to some nice bath/shower products and make the most of the experience if /and when you can

- o Purchase an eye mask and take the time if you can to nap when your baby does in the day.

- o Sit quietly and flick through a magazine.

- o Watch your favourite movies or T.V shows while feeding your baby.

- o Take a gentle walk, being out in the fresh air has so many benefits for your health

- o Try journaling your thoughts

- o It is ok to cocoon away in those very early days of recovery, however, as soon as you are up to it try and make some time to meet up with other new mums. This can help you feel more positive and supported in those early weeks and months.

Whilst its normal for many women to feel a bit down, tearful or anxious in the first couple of weeks after giving birth, if your symptoms go on much longer then you could have postnatal depression or even postnatal PTSD. It is important that you speak to someone about how you are feeling, whether that's a midwife, GP or even a friend or family member.

Post Birth Trauma

Post birth trauma or PTSD is a type of anxiety disorder. Around 6% of women are diagnosed with post-traumatic stress after childbirth, however, it is believed that a further 20 – 25% of women go undiagnosed. Many women can be mistakenly diagnosed as having post-natal depression which may lead to ineffective treatment. Unlike someone with depression who may be feeling unmotivated and lethargic, someone with post birth trauma may feel more on 'red' alert. They can experience anxiety, panic attacks, vivid flashbacks, nightmares and even physical sensations such as pain, sweating, nausea or trembling.

What can cause Postnatal PTSD?

- o A difficult labour with a long and painful delivery.
- o A short intense labour.
- o An unplanned caesarean section.
- o Emergency treatment.
- o High levels of medical intervention.
- o Non-consensual intervention.
- o Feeling invisible / unheard.
- o Neglect – being left alone.
- o Inadequate labour and delivery care.
- o Fear of the baby dying.

You may be left feeling that childbirth was not the experience you were hoping for. Or you might feel angry with the medical staff if you felt that the delivery wasn't handled well. Your experiences may leave you feeling anxious about having another baby in future.

It is helpful to talk about your traumatic birth experiences with family, friends or your GP. Many hospitals offer a birth reflections service for free, and there are also many specialist post birth trauma coaches who offer support services too.

It can also be helpful and therapeutic to journal down your thoughts, please check out the journal section at the end of this book.

Your Body After Birth

Your body will be in recovery mode after enduring tremendous changes and undergoing the physical demands and strains of growing and birthing your baby, you may experience aches and pains all over your body. If you had a C section, vaginal tearing or an episiotomy, a big part of your 4th trimester will be healing from these, which may require careful hygiene, healing of stitches and caring for wounds. This may also mean avoiding certain activities.

Bleeding and Discharge - Every woman bleeds after giving birth, this bleeding is called lochia which is a combination of mucous, tissue and blood that your womb sheds. Bleeding typically lasts between 24 to 36 days. Any sort of gentle exercise could also make you bleed heavier, even just doing a little bit of light housework. Contact your midwife or doctor if you have heavy vaginal bleeding and you are soaking a pad in less than an hour, especially if you have pelvic pain or a fever.

After Pains - You might experience some after pain, as well as bleeding. Afterpains may begin immediately after you give birth to your baby, they tend to peak in intensity 2 and 3 days after birth and continue for around 7-10 days.

Vaginal Soreness - If you had a vaginal birth you will likely be feeling sore, particularly if you had a vaginal tear or episiotomy during delivery. The wound might hurt for a few weeks. You can take pain relief and can cool the area between your vaginal opening and anus (perineum) with an ice pack or a chilled witch hazel pad. It can also help to use a doughnut ring to sit on.



Piles — Piles are common after birth, but they should disappear within a few days. Eat plenty of fresh fruit, veg, salad and whole grains and make sure you drink plenty of water.

Tender Breasts — If you are breast feeding there can be some physical symptoms, such as breast tenderness, nipple pain and plugged milk ducts. Even if you decide not to breast feed your body will take a couple of weeks to stop producing milk so you may leak, and may experience sore and swollen breasts, this should get better after several days. To ease breast discomfort, apply warm washcloths or take a warm shower before breastfeeding or expressing. Between feedings, place cold washcloths on your breasts. Over-the-counter pain relievers might help, too.

Incontinence - Your pelvic floor muscles can become stretched and even damaged during a vaginal delivery which can cause you to leak a few drops of urine while sneezing, laughing or coughing. These problems usually improve within weeks but might persist long term. Practising pelvic floor exercises (kegals) can help tone your pelvic floor muscles

Sweating - You may experience night sweats or hot flushes which are due to hormonal changes after birth. It may be your body's way of getting rid of some of the extra pregnancy.

Hair Loss - During pregnancy, elevated hormone levels mean your hair grows faster than it sheds. After delivery, you'll experience hair loss for up to five months. Taking collagen can help to restore your hair back to its pre-pregnancy state by increasing the levels in the body, supporting it in creating the protein within your hair, keratin.

CARE TIPS

- o Manage pain to help your recovery, use medicated cooling pads on stitches and swelling, as well as taking ibuprofen if approved by your doctor or midwife.
- o Keep stitches and scars clean and wear loose, comfortable underwear.
- o Treat hemorrhoids by using cream or pads, drink plenty of water to flush your system and try taking a stool softener, if it's particularly painful.
- o Try to avoid too much sugar as this can slow down healing.
- o Eat nutritious, warming foods that help you replenish your energy levels and boost your body with much needed vitamins.
- o Rest while you can and eat well.
- o For sore breasts wear a bra that fits and supports you and use cooling pads for any swelling.

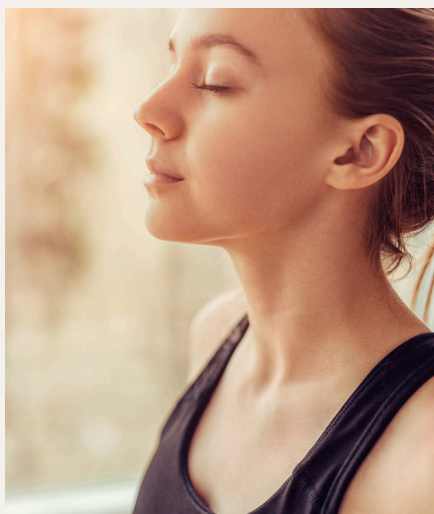
Sleep and Fatigue

In the first few weeks after birth, your new baby will be pretty closely attached to you as they get used to being on-the-outside. They will also be feeding every 2-4 hours and may not sleep much, not in very long periods at a time anyway. Your nerves will be on high alert as you tune in to your baby's needs, combined with hormonal fluctuations, lack of sleep and recovering from birth itself, this can leave a new mother feeling incredibly fatigued.

Experts advise to fit in sleep whenever possible, such as when the baby is sleeping, but this isn't always possible, if they are only napping for short periods. However, it's still important to rest when your baby is sleeping. If you can't manage a nap, read a few pages of a book or magazine, enjoy a cup of tea or try listening to a meditation. Practising meditation or relaxation exercises even for 5 to 10 minutes can help you relax and feel a little more refreshed.

Try this calming breathing technique, you can do it standing up, sitting in a chair that supports your back, or lying on a bed.

- Let your breath flow as deep down into your belly as is comfortable, without forcing it.
- Try breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth.
- Breathe in gently and regularly. Some people find it helpful to count steadily from 1 to 5.



- You may not be able to reach 5 at first.
- Then let it flow out gently, counting from 1 to 5 again, if you find this helpful.
- Keep doing this for at least 5 minutes.

Breathing techniques and relaxing with a book may seem like small things but they will help with your wellbeing. Lack of sleep can leave you feeling fuzzy and a little emotional, so any time spent in relaxation, however small, is important.

Tips to help postnatal sleep

- Limit your caffeine intake especially close to bedtime.
- 'IF' it is possible, take a warm bath before bed (and if cleared by your doctor)
- Avoid phones/laptop screens for at least one hour before bedtime
- Use lavender oils/ sprays to help promote relaxation
- Try using a weighted eye mask to help aid a deeper sleep

It may feel like you will be sleep deprived forever, but in time, your baby will begin to settle and sleep for longer periods.



Breast Feeding

If you are breast feeding, especially for the first time you may have a learning curve ahead of you. As well as the physical demands, it can also be challenging latching for some mums and babies. Please know that this is very normal and there are support groups and lactation consultants that can help you.

Physical symptoms can include lumpy breasts, tenderness, cracked nipples and mastitis. You can use an anti-inflammatory cooling compresses between feeds to help relieve tenderness and take a pain relief as directed by your midwife. There are also various creams that can be used to relieve cracks and sores. It is also beneficial to drink plenty of water.

Lumps are generally due to plugged milk ducts you can help this by gently massaging your breast whilst feeding your baby to encourage milk flow. If you experience flu like symptoms or redness in one area seek some medical advice.

Breast feeding mothers generally need more calories to meet their nutritional needs as breast feeding itself burns calories. Roughly 330 to 500 additional kcal per day compared to the amount they were consuming before pregnancy (aprox 2000 to 2800 per day, verses 1600 to 2400 for non- breast-feeding mums.) Breast feeding releases oxytocin which helps uterus return to its pre pregnancy size. You may notice that you bleed more when you breast feed.





Breastmilk is love turned into food



- o Avoid leaning forward to nurse and try to fully support your back by putting a pillow under the crock of your arm, or under your head, between your legs. Adjust yourself to feel comfortable.

- o Wear a supportive bra, even at night if needed. Make sure it fits well and is not too tight.

- o Avoid restrictive clothing and underwire bras, which can cause blocked milk ducts and increase the risk of breast infection.

- o Massage your breast while feeding to help promote the flow of milk

- o Change nursing pads whenever they become damp, wet, or soiled.

- o Drink plenty of water

- o Consume sufficient calories and eat plenty of nutrient sufficient foods to replace what you lose through feeding



CEASAREAN RECOVERY

Back in the early 1970s a woman who gave birth by Caesarean section would be in hospital for an average of 7.8 days compared to now where the average hospital stay is between 2 to 4 days. Now compare this to having knee surgery or having your gallbladder removed which has an average hospital stay of 3 to 5 days. Let us bare-in mind here that these latter surgeries do not require the patient to be looking after a new-born while tackling little sleep on top of their recovery from surgery. It is easy to forget you have had major surgery when you have a baby to look after and are sent home to 'get on with it' but it is important to remember you 'have' had a major procedure and you need to look after yourself. Listen to your body and rest when you need to.

In the first week after your caesarean it is quite normal for your scar to be puffy and slightly raised, you can also expect some numbness and soreness. Your midwife will advise you how to look after your wound at home, advising you on how to gently clean and dry the area, and how to look for signs of infection. She should also advise you on what pain relief is best for you. Controlling your pain after surgery will make it easier for you to take care of yourself and your baby. For most women, it's better to take paracetamol or ibuprofen. If you are breast feeding you want to avoid aspirin.

Wear soft, loose fitting clothing and high waisted underwear that doesn't put pressure on your scar. You may want to spend the first few days at home wearing a nursing nighty and dressing gown, these will be comfortable to wear while the incision is at its most swollen. It is important to remember that a C-section is major abdominal surgery and rest is essential for recovery especially in the first few weeks



In the first few days after birth you will probably feel full of gas due to the surgery itself, general swelling, medication and lack of mobility. It would be a good idea to take a stool softener to help prevent constipation, straining and bloating which could irritate your incision. It is also important to drink plenty of water and eat a balanced diet to keep your bowels functioning well. Plenty of protein will help the scar tissue to heal, whereas too much sugar may slow the healing process down. It's also important that you urinate regularly. A full bladder makes it harder for your uterus to stay contracted and increases pressure on your C-section wound.

Around 5 to 7 days after giving birth, your midwife will check your healing process and take out any non-dissolvable stitches or staples. From about 2 weeks you can use silicone scar sheets on your wound if it is healed. These can help keep the wound hydrated and prevent it from drying out.

Movement and deep breathing are essential during recovery since they help you avoid getting blood clots or chest infections. You need to avoid heavy lifting, housework, or any big movements that might stretch or irritate the scar for the first 6 weeks.

You can however begin pelvic floor exercises and core breathing as soon as it feels comfortable to do so. You can re-train your core to function from the diaphragm down through to the pelvic floor muscles. You can do this by practicing your core breathing from a supine position, and when comfortable, in a seated position. Core breathing is simple. When you inhale, feel your ribcage, belly, and pelvic floor expand and relax very gently. Then on your exhale breathe encourage activation through the pelvic floor and deep abdominal muscles. This will help you protect your back, gently strengthen your abdominals and will prevent you from leaking urine. This gentle core breathing exercise is safe and will not hurt your stitches or scar.

You may benefit from using an abdominal binder as this will give some support and compression around both your belly and the incision area and can help you feel a little more comfortable.

It can take months for your tummy to heal and just because you have your sign off from your doctor between six to ten weeks doesn't mean you should rush back to exercise. You need to remember that just because your external scar has healed it doesn't mean that the internal scarring has healed. Start with activities that help you build a strong foundation and slowly tone and flatten your tummy, like postnatal yoga or Pilates. If you purchased a birthing ball in pregnancy, don't deflate it just yet as simply sitting on it can help you gently tone the core. Do NOT rush into doing rigorous ab routines like crunches as this can cause harm to your scar and risk intra-abdominal pressure and pelvic floor issues.

After several months, you will notice that your incision will heal into a scar although it may still be slightly tender or even numb to touch. Scar massages can reduce C-section scar tissue formation internally and externally and can help ensure a smoother scar. A woman who has had recurrent abdominal surgery may be at risk of Diastasis Recti (abdominal separation),

Your Pelvic Floor

Your pelvic floor muscles come under massive strain during pregnancy and when you give birth. Even if you had a caesarean your pelvic floor muscles can become weak. Your pelvic floor is a supportive sling of muscles, ligaments and tissues that stretches across your pelvic bones. It does the important job of supporting your pelvic organs, which include your womb (uterus), bladder and bowels. If your muscles are weak or damaged, you can leak a bit of wee when you cough, sneeze or strain. This is known as stress incontinence, which is actually very common following childbirth.

Pelvic floor exercises help to strengthen these muscles and help you can control of your bladder and bowel. You can practise these exercises (Kegals) soon after birth, as soon as you feel comfortable to do so. Doing daily kegals can also improve blood flow, which will help to reduce any swelling and bruising swelling and bruising you may have following birth. To get your pelvic floor muscles strong again, exercise them lying down, sitting or standing. You may not be able to feel your pelvic floor at first, because the nerves in that area stretched as you pushed your baby out. Even if you can't feel anything happening, you will still be doing yourself some good.

How should I do pelvic floor exercises - Start exercising your pelvic floor muscles when you're lying on your back, or on your side or even in a child's pose position if it feels comfortable.



- o Breathe in, and as you breathe out, gently squeeze your pelvic floor muscles. Try not to pull in your tummy muscles. Just focus on pulling your pelvic floor muscles up and in, as if you're trying not to wee or pass wind.

- o Hold the squeeze for four or five seconds, at first, while you continue to breathe in and out as normal.

- o If you are tightening your upper tummy muscles (above your belly button) or your buttocks, you're trying too hard!

Sometimes pelvic floor muscles can become overactive, (hypertonic) this is when they are too tense and cannot relax. An overactive pelvic floor can happen when you're constantly contracting your pelvic floor muscles without realising it. This can be caused by tension due to pain or damage to your tissues. If you have an overactive pelvic floor you may experience pelvic health concerns such as constipation, painful sex, urgency and pelvic pain. It can increase the risk of leaking wee (stress incontinence), because your pelvic floor is not working as it should. A hypertonic pelvic floor may also be accompanied by tension in surrounding hip and pelvic muscles.

You can help to prevent this by focusing on the relaxation part of your pelvic floor exercises. After you have tightened your pelvic floor, make sure that you let go completely and let it relax for a count of 10 seconds before starting another exercise.



Breath, Core and Pelvic Floor

Within minutes of your baby's birth, contractions cause your uterus to shrink. After the placenta is delivered, uterine contractions close off the open blood vessels where the placenta was attached. You may feel cramps, known as afterpains, as this happens which last up to 10 days post birth. For the first couple of days after giving birth, you'll be able to feel the top of your uterus near your belly button. In a week, your uterus will be half the size it was just after you gave birth. After two weeks, it will be back inside your pelvis. It could take around six to eight weeks, for your womb to contract to its pre-pregnancy size. This process is called involution of the uterus.

Even after your uterus shrinks back to its normal size, you may continue to look pregnant for several weeks or even months. That's because your abdominal muscles get stretched out during pregnancy, and it takes time to fully recover your tummy from birth and you may have a tummy that's squishier and rounder than you expected. The decrease in your tummy size may be slow, but it will be steady, just imagine that your tummy is a balloon, slowly inflating as your baby grows. Giving birth doesn't pop the balloon, it just starts a slow leak.

After giving birth you may still have a dark line down your tummy called a linea nigra, which is caused by pigmentation in the skin where your tummy muscles have stretched and slightly separated, to accommodate your growing baby. This line of pigmentation usually fades within a few months of giving birth. If your tummy muscles feel very slack, it could be because pregnancy has over-stretched them. If this is the case, you may also notice a bulge developing on the front of your tummy, above and below your belly button. This over-stretching tummy gap is called diastasis recti (DR). There are four layers of muscle across your tummy. The top layer is a pair of long, flat muscles that run vertically down each side of your abdomen (rectus abdominis), commonly known as the six-pack. DR happens when the two halves pull away from each other, stretching and thinning the connective tissue between them.

Here's how to check the size of your separation, after you've had your baby:

- Lie on your back, bend your knees and have your feet flat on the floor.
- Lift your shoulders off the floor a bit and look down at your belly.
- Feel with your fingertips between the edges of the muscles, above and below your belly button. Check the number of fingers you can fit between your separated muscles.
- Check this regularly to see that the gap is decreasing.

Once your baby is eight weeks old, your muscles will usually have returned to normal. If the gap is still obvious, you could be risking back problems, so speak to your GP or book in for a Mummy MOT.



What is Diastasis Recti?



Gentle belly breath can help you to reconnect to your core and can help with the healing of any diastasis recti that may have resulted from pregnancy (as long as you are not 'over' expanding the belly).

What is Diastasis Recti?

It is a separation of the abdominal wall usually occurring in the rectus abdomini or the outermost layer of the abdominal wall. The severity of this separation differs in all women and can be measured by your healthcare professional. Most cases, with proper awareness and mindful abdominal techniques, heal on their own, but some may require physical therapy.



Postnatal Nutrition

There isn't a huge amount of guidance on nutrition for postnatal recovery. Eating well will make a huge difference to your health AND how your body heals. Nutrition is a key part of postnatal recovery and is often overlooked. What we eat plays an important role in both physical healing and your postnatal mental health, but it's one of the quickest things to go to the wayside when a new baby comes into the picture. It's a good idea to start preparing some meals you can pop in the freezer before the baby is born and make sure the cupboards and fridge are packed with healthy foods and snacks. In those first few days back at home you don't want to think about cooking or going out for food shopping, so making sure you have things ready prepared will take the pressure off and make sure your getting the food you need to heal.

Eating well is one of the most important forms of self-care for the postnatal mother, and it's crucial to have a plan in place for how and what to feed yourself in order to prioritise your healing. The process of bringing a baby into the world is physically, mentally and emotionally challenging. Proper nutrition is a crucial element to restoring your body and maintaining your overall wellness, allowing you to not only heal from the experience of pregnancy and childbirth, but is a good foundation to help you flourish as a mother.



Warming Porridge

Ingredients:-

½ cup rolled oats 1 ½ cup milk of choice

1 ½ tablespoon butter

1/3 cup of berries (fresh or frozen)

Chopped nuts and seeds of choice

Shredded coconut (optional)

Honey or syrup

Spices like cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger

Method:

1. In a small saucepan bring your milk of choice to a boil. Lower the heat and stir in the oats continuing to stir gently. If you like a thick consistency you will need to cook slowly for around 10-15 minutes.

2. In a separate pan gently heat berries on low until soft enough to mash.

3. When oats are ready add the butter, spices and your honey/syrup and stir until combined.

4. Pour into a bowl and top with the fruit and any nuts, seeds or coconut ready to eat.



Super Green Shot

This quick and easy recipe will give you a vitamin boost

Ingredients:-

Avocado

Spinach

Green Apple

Cucumber

Celery

Lemon

Ginger (shredded)

Cup of water

Method

Blend and drink



Overnight Oats

Ingredients:-

Oats
Milk of choice
Greek yogurt
Pure maple syrup or honey
chia seeds
Vanilla extract
Cinnamon
Sea salt
Optional - berries, nut butter, seeds

Method

Combine the ingredients into an air tight jar and place in the refrigerator overnight. Top or mix in berries, nut butter and seeds



Energy Balls

Ingredients

100g pecan
75g raisin
1 tbsp ground flaxseed
1 tbsp cocoa powder
1 tbsp agave syrup
50g desiccated coconut
2 tbsp peanut butter

Method

Put pecan in a food processor and blitz to crumbs. add raisins, peanut butter, flaxseeds, cocoa powder and agave syrup, then pulse to combine, shape mixture into golf ball sized balls and roll in desiccated coconut to coat. Put in the fridge to firm for 20 mins, then eat whenever you need a quick energy boost.



Nourishing Tomato and Herb Soup

Ingredients:

4 cups (chopped) seeded and peeled tomato—
either fresh or whole canned
3 cups tomato juice
1 cup lowfat milk
¼ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon black pepper
¼ teaspoon dried oregano
8-10 fresh basil leaves, chopped

Method

Bring tomatoes and tomato juice to a boil in a large saucepan. Reduce heat and simmer uncovered for 20 minutes. Blend mixture, herbs, and spices on puree until fairly smooth.

Return to pan and stir in milk.



Supergreen Lentil Soup

Ingredients:

370 g (13 oz/2 cups) lentils o
3 tablespoons olive oil
1 onion, finely chopped
3 carrots, diced or sliced
3 celery stalks, chopped or sliced
3 large garlic cloves, finely chopped
2 tablespoons cumin seeds
1 teaspoon ground fenugreek
1 litre (34 fl oz/4 cups) veggie stock
500 ml (17 fl oz/2 cups) water
250g frozen greens, or 2 large bunches of
kale, chard, collard greens or any other
seasonal greens you can find
salt and freshly ground black pepper

Method:- Soak lentils overnight. In pan heat onion, carrots, celery, then add the garlic, cumin seeds and fenugreek. add lentils and boil for 20 mins then add green veg. Serve with sauerkraut, bread or cooked quinoa



Further Support

I hope you enjoyed my book and found it helpful. For more support with your early postnatal period you can purchase my E'books -'Your Postnatal Wellness Plan' and other books over on Amazon.

You can also find more resources over on my website - www.thebalancedbirthpodcast.co.uk Here you can also tune in to podcast episodes but you will also find articles on everything from pregnancy to motherhood, including articles on the fourth trimester, postnatal healing and so much more.

You can also find classes and courses at my studio or on demand by visiting www.thebalancedspace.co.uk

Thank you for reading

Sarah x

