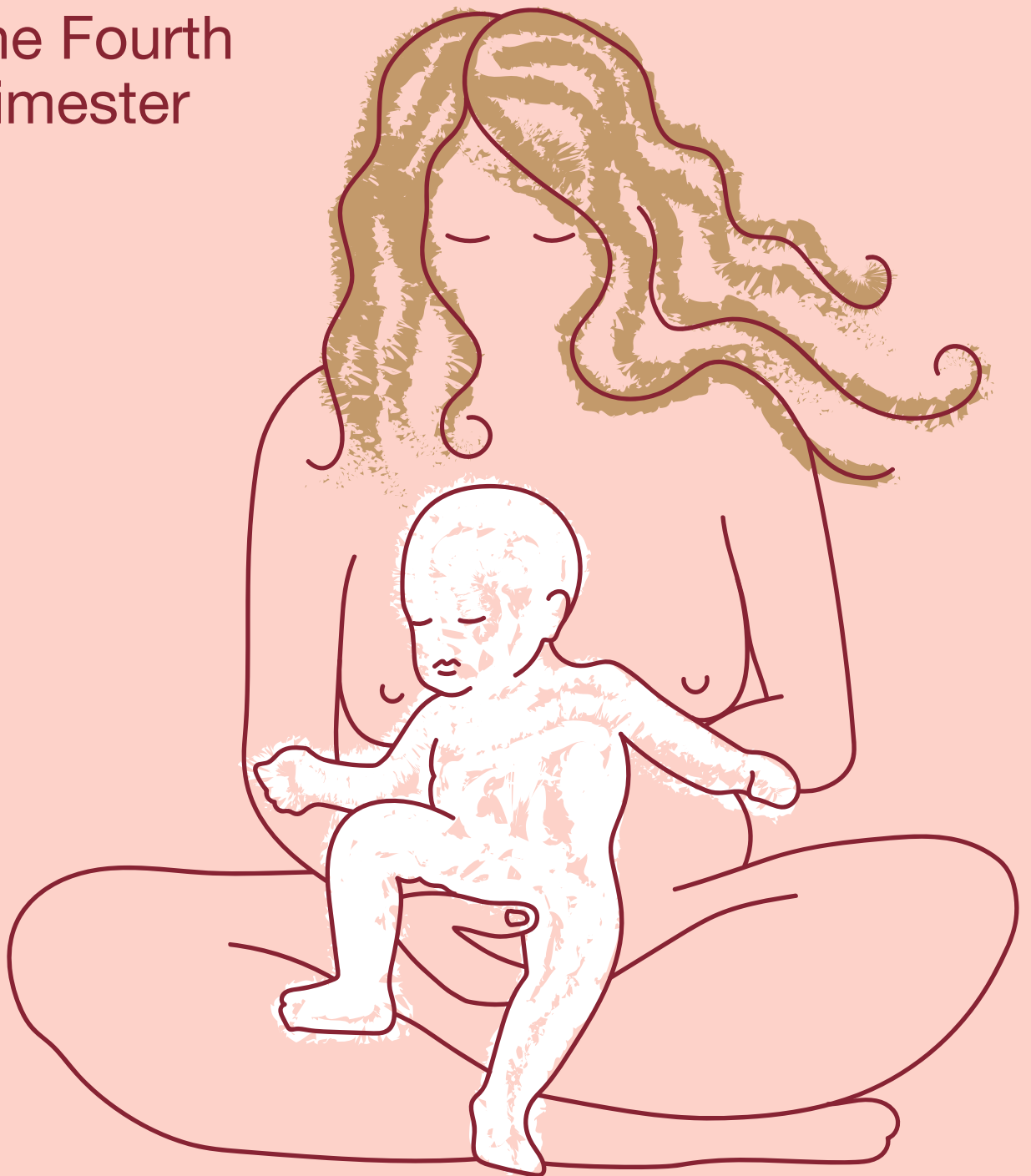


Restore the **Mother**

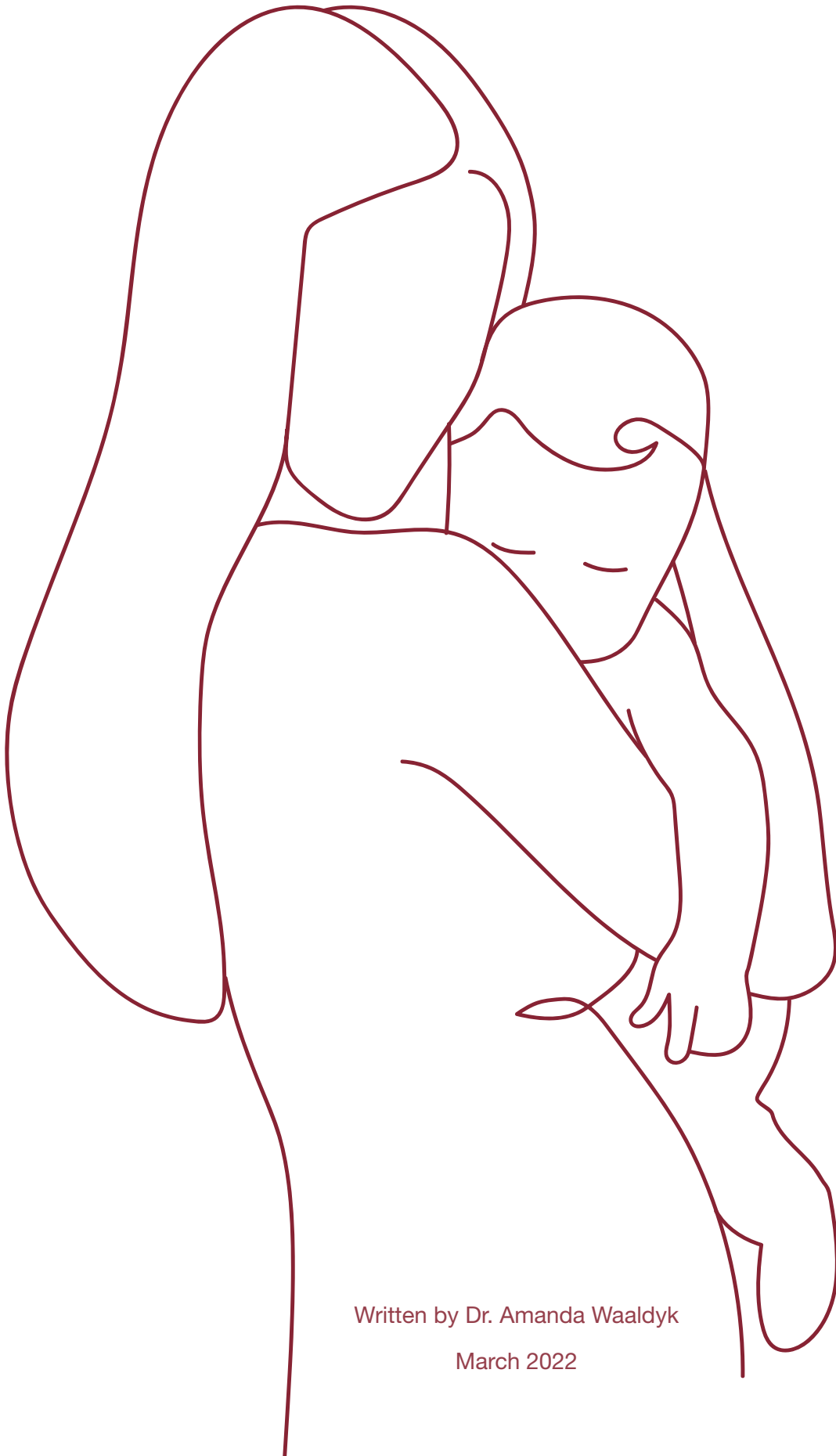
The Fourth
Trimester



Angea

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Restore the **Mother**

The Fourth Trimester

Being born and giving birth are two of the most impactful events in the lifetime of a woman. Birth is the first encounter earth side in physical form. The second is when a woman gives birth – not only to her newborn – but herself. It is in this moment, a woman becomes a mother.

The first 40 days post birth offer a time of healing and nourishment. In Ayurvedic tradition, this postnatal time frame is called the 'Sacred Window' and in Chinese Medicine, 'Sitting the Month' (Zuo Ye Zi).

After delivery, a woman takes around six weeks to heal from the intensity of labour and to become familiar with her new role as a mother. It's essential to understand that these first few weeks establish important and delicate patterns that will affect the individual, child and family for decades.

Many Eastern cultures around the world honour this time in a woman's life. Postpartum rituals ensure women heal and recover properly.

These sacred traditions and rituals, practiced across different cultures, all have a common theme: organised support for the mother, periods of rest, prescribed food to be eaten or prohibited, hygiene practices, and those related to infant care and breastfeeding.

These rituals allow the mother to be 'mothered' for a period of time after she has given birth, ensuring the woman has a community of support as she transitions into motherhood.

Home aftercare 6-8 weeks

- / Avoid stairs, lifting (even baby if she's big!)
- / Hold abdomen when sneezing/coughing
- / Abdominal binder may be helpful (<6 weeks, <12hrs/day)

Watch for:

- / Pus, redness, swelling or pain of scar
- / Fever (more than mild)
- / Heavy bleeding or malodorous discharge
- / Leg pain/swelling, chest pain
- / Postpartum depression

Overview:

- / The way a woman feels about her birth can have a profound influence on the immediate postpartum period
- / Separation from her baby in the immediate hours after birth can have an impact on both mum and baby
- / When necessary, interventions are lifesaving, when used appropriately, they can disrupt the fragile mechanisms that set infants and mothers up for the transition from pregnancy to life outside the womb

Postpartum Care

Strategies for care in the first few hours postpartum:

- / Facilitate skin to skin immediately (or ASAP). If Mum is not available, then dad or partner
- / Facilitate breastfeeding
- / Address immediate medical issues (retained placenta, pain etc)
- / Make sure Mother is fully aware of everything going on with the baby. If baby is in NICU make sure Mother has frequent updates
- / Help mother get nutrition and hydration ASAP
- / Acupuncture and Herbs if possible



Chong Mai	Du Mai	Ren Mai
Sea of blood & yuan qi	Sea of Yang	Sea of Yin
Blueprint for life. Source of curriculum. Transmission of genetic material from parents.	Construction Function Action Expansion	Building materials Substance Nourishment Containment

Treatment strategies for common issues:

- / General post birth tonification
- / Retained placenta
- / Baby Blues
- / Mother in shock or trauma (PTSD)
- / Heavy bleeding / blood loss
- / Perineal pain / injury

Post birth tonification:

- / All new mothers suffer from sort of depletion or injury following birth, all require support and nourishment to heal
- / Acupuncture can be quickly and easily employed to help 'close' the birth and bring qi and blood back to the mother
- / Herbs can be used immediately to begin supporting the healing process
- / Moxa or 'mother warming' is excellent for warming up a depleted postpartum mum

Acupuncture / Moxa / Acupressure immediately post birth

Mother warming / Moxa



Mother warming:

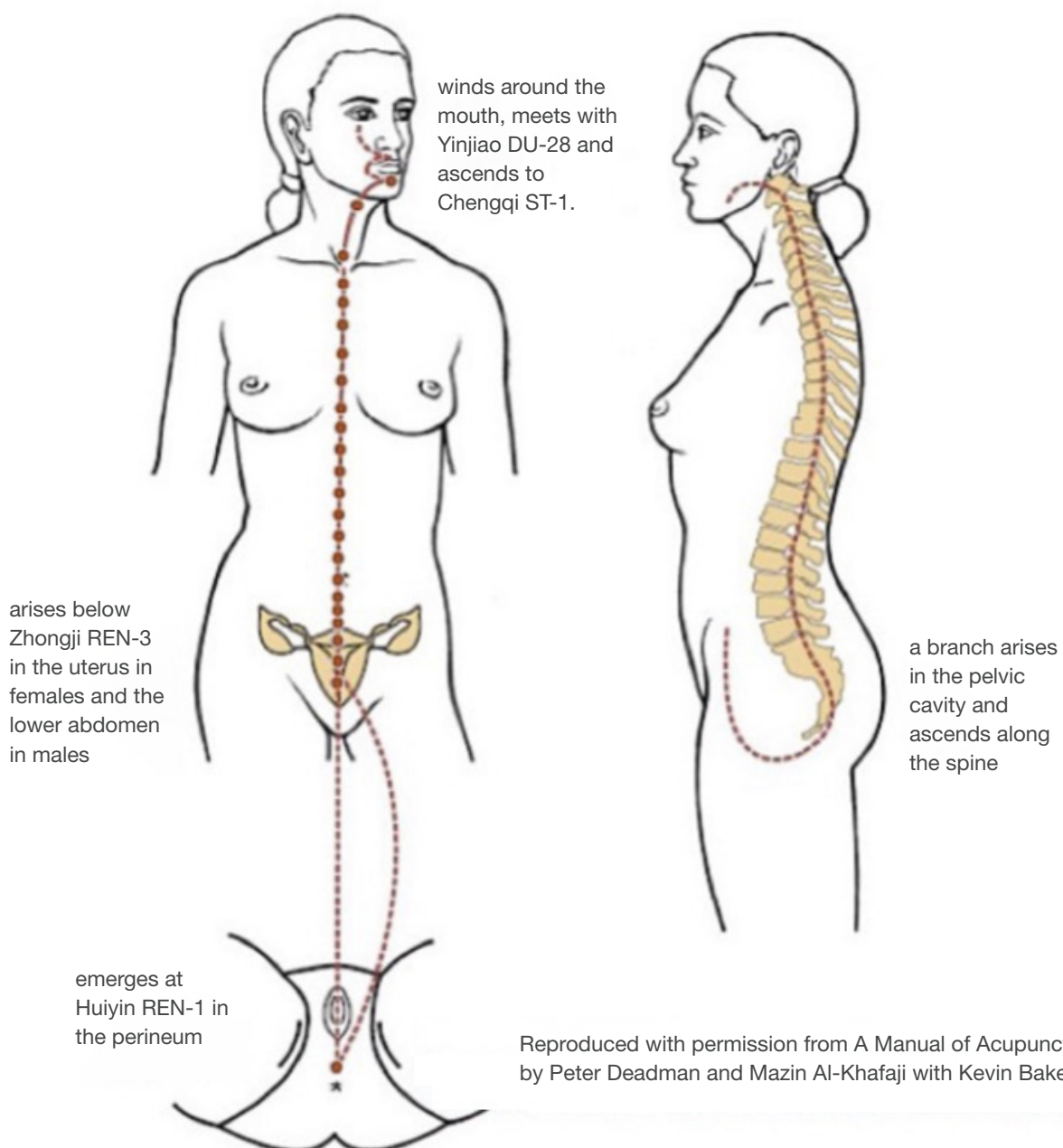
- / The use of Moxibustion to warm the channels and collateral that have been opened and made vulnerable during childbirth
- / Moxibustion is applied along the Ren Mai from Ren 2- Ren 8 and into the lower back region of Ming Men until pleasantly warm, 10-15 minutes
- / Typically performed 4-5 days postpartum, can be repeated as often as mother would like
- / Contra-indicated if toxic heat (inflammation & infection) is present.
Be careful over the C-section scars

LU 7 / KID 6 (Ren Mai)	ST 36	Choose depending on presentation. REN 6 - yang (cold xu), Ren 9 (water retention), REN 12 (blood loss), REN 17 (anxiety)
SP 4 PC 6 (Chong Mai)	SP 6	

Ren Mai

Here is a simplified illustration of what the Ren channel looks like.

The Ren Mai or Ren Meridian -- also known as the Conception Vessel is a channel of life-force energy (Qi) within the subtle body, that is used in qigong and acupuncture practice.



Reproduced with permission from A Manual of Acupuncture by Peter Deadman and Mazin Al-Khafaji with Kevin Baker.

The 5 pillars for postpartum care

1. Retreat

2. Rest

3. Warmth

4. Support

5. Nourishment

Introducing the Resting Month “Zuo Yi Zi”:

- / Personalised support each weekday in your home.
- / Practical guidance on TCM postpartum care philosophy.
- / Delivery of organic broth/soup/slow cooked casserole, that can be eaten periodically throughout the day and night, rich in Qi and blood building herbs to support recovery and lactation, all prepared according to TCM postpartum care principles.
- / Delivery of 2L flask of hydrating warming beverage (healing herbal infusions) prepared according to TCM postpartum care principles.
- / TCM treatment changing day to day according to diagnosis and requirements: acupuncture, warm oil massage, hot ginger compress, full-body herbal soak bath (if a bathtub is available), belly wrapping.
- / Individually prescribed Chinese herbal medicine formulas if required depending on diagnosis.
- / Preparation of tissue healing and swelling reducing herbal sitz bath.
- / General support to create and maintain a calming and nurturing home environment that is conducive to engaging in rest and breastfeeding.

Treatment:

Days 1-7 : Uterus healing and wound recovery

Days 8-14: Digestive well-being and tissue repair

Days 14-21 : Physical strength & nourishment

Days 23-40: Preparing to re-emerge into the world in robust health

Postpartum herbs & nutrition

Week 1

Support for mother in the first week:

- / Bring in Milk
- / Support Mother's emotions / Support physical healing
- / Have someone take you to the bathroom / after delivery
- / Gradually increase your active hours up each day, do not overexert yourself
- / If you shower, have someone standby
- / Keep your bowels loose - don't wait longer than 24 hours. First bowel movement is often difficult. Use slow deep breaths to help you relax
- / Rest well in the first week of delivery
- / If you have a tear or stitches use the maternity pads- soaked or soak your bottom in a clean tub with herbs described above for 20 minutes

Nourishing foods for Week 1 (based on the sitting moon, Ni/Chen):

- / Chicken broth
- / Organic chicken bone, pork, grass fed beef / to nourish blood, amino acids for healing
- / Organic pasture raised eggs
- / Grains: millet, amaranth, quinoa, rice, pearl barley - strengthen digestion, reduce edema
- / Broccoli / cauliflower: Vitamin K for wound healing and clotting
- / Chinese yam or sweet potato
- / Dark leafy green vegetables calcium for bowel regulation
- / Toasted sesame oil: lubricates intestines
- / Da Zao, Hong Zao, Gou ji zi, Sheng Jiang

Week 2

Mum may be feeling stronger and better, but it's STILL critical that she rest and recover and continue to recover, refrain from over activity or heavy lifting. Breastfeeding is in full swing. Nipples may very cracked/sore. Nipples need extra care with food -grade creams, herbal compresses and special attention to the baby's latch. Breast-feeding can feel overwhelming at this time. Mum will need extra support and professional help if things become difficult. Lactation consultant if breast-feeding difficulty.

Nourishing foods for Week 2:

- / Bone Broth soup with lots of leafy greens, miso (rich in B vitamins), sesame oil, minerals and trace minerals also help lubricate bowels
- / Organic chicken, beef, lamb, eggs
- / Veggies rich in Vitamin K and folate, dark leafy greens, asparagus
- / Organic pasteurized liver: rich in iron, B Vitamins, Folate, Vitamin K



Week 4

Most women feel significantly better by now, but are still very vulnerable to injury and cold invasion.

Nourishing foods for Week 4 and beyond:

- / Organic beef/chicken
- / Healthy fats include coconut oil, butter from grass fed cows, nuts and nut butters
- / Bone Broth/Shiitake broth
- / Organic eggs
- / Seafood to replenish Kidney Jing (esp oysters. Wild caught salmon & cod, shellfish)
- / Liver
- / Dark leafy greens

Recommended postpartum supplements:

- / Prenatal Vitamins
- / Fish Oil or Cod Liver Oil
- / Probiotics - Bioceutical/Metagenics
- / Magnesium
- / Vitamin D
- / Gentle Iron (Floradix)

Breast feeding

Breastfeeding is associated with infant health benefits, such as fewer childhood illnesses, lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels, lower prevalence of obesity, and improved intelligence as adults. Maternal benefits of breastfeeding include faster involution of the uterus and lower risk of haemorrhage after birth, in addition to lower a lower lifetime incidence of type II diabetes, and breast and ovarian cancer.⁶

Pregnancy hormones (estrogen, progesterone and prolactin, oxytocin) cause the breasts to undergo major changes. This is noticed primarily as enlargement. In early pregnancy, ducts and alveoli rapidly multiply. Breasts are often very tender.

Lactogenesis

Lactogenesis is the initiation of milk production that occurs in 3 phases.

Phase 1:

- / 12 weeks before birth, breasts begin to make colostrum which is stored in the alveoli. Progesterone keeps the breasts from secreting colostrum and inhibits the production of milk.
- / Colostrum is available to the baby immediately after birth. It is extremely calorically dense and full of antibodies.
- / It is the perfect food for a newborn and should be offered on demand.
- / Babies: Breath, suck, swallow - colostrum helps them to figure out and develop muscles throat and nose.

Phase 2:

- / Frequent stimulation of the nipples will increase the speed at which mature milk is produced.
- / Foundation of microbiome and life long immunity.
- / Baby's stomach is the size of our thumb.
- / Begins after birth when the placenta is delivered. Progesterone levels drop quickly while prolactin remains high. Blood flow to breast increases and in 2-3 days colostrum transitions and mature milk comes in.
- / At this phase lactation is controlled by hormones (will be produced whether or not baby is nursing) and milk supply is increased by stimulation (ie frequent feeds, or pumping). Frequent feeding/pumping increase prolactin receptors which in turn increase milk supply.
- / Oxytocin causes muscle contractions in breasts, pushes milk into ducts/alveoli and nipples "let down".

Phase 3: known as Galactopoiesis - the establishment of mature milk supply

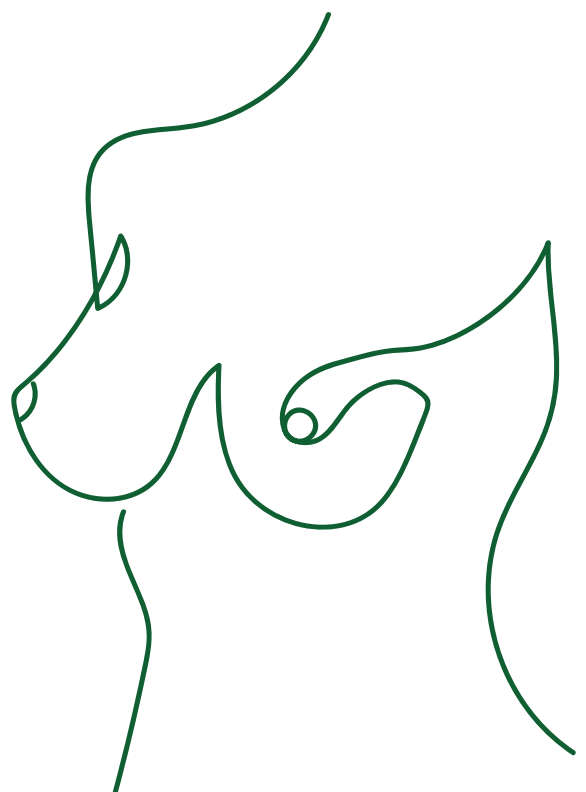
- / Milk supply switches from endocrine to autocrine control: continued milk production.
- / Depends on more frequent removal of milk from the breasts than on circulating hormones.
- / Supply and demand principle takes over.
- / Adequate rest, nutrition and hydration is vital to sustaining supply.

Immediately postpartum:

- / Traumatic birth
- / Separation mother / baby
- / Loss of fluids, bloods
- / Long labour or C-section
- / Postpartum depletion or stress

Nutrition to promote lactation & milk supply:

- / Drink plenty of water
- / Source foods organically grown
- / Fenugreek - these aromatic seeds are often touted as potent galactagogues
- / Oatmeal or oats
- / Grains: oats, millet, barley, sweet rice
- / Bone Broth - gelatin
- / Nettle & fennel tea - first 40 days
- / Herbal tea of mint, rose and barley



Liver Qi stagnation

- / Scanty lactation
- / Inability, difficulty sleeping, restlessness
- / Hypochondrial pain or distension
- / Dark leafy greens
- / Fennel seeds
- / Legumes - azuki beans, chickpeas, lentils, mung beans, soybeans
- / Sea vegetables - trace minerals
- / Lean meat and poultry
- / Oats & chia congee - first 40 days
- / Cumin & fenugreek tea - first 40 days
- / Lactation cookies
- / Breast engorgement, hardness & pain
- / Anxiety, difficulty sitting with baby
- / Rose & mint tea with coconut water - together these herbs gently move liver qi and lift the spirits
Brew herbs in large pot. Can be taken hot or cooled, combined with coconut water increases hydrating properties.

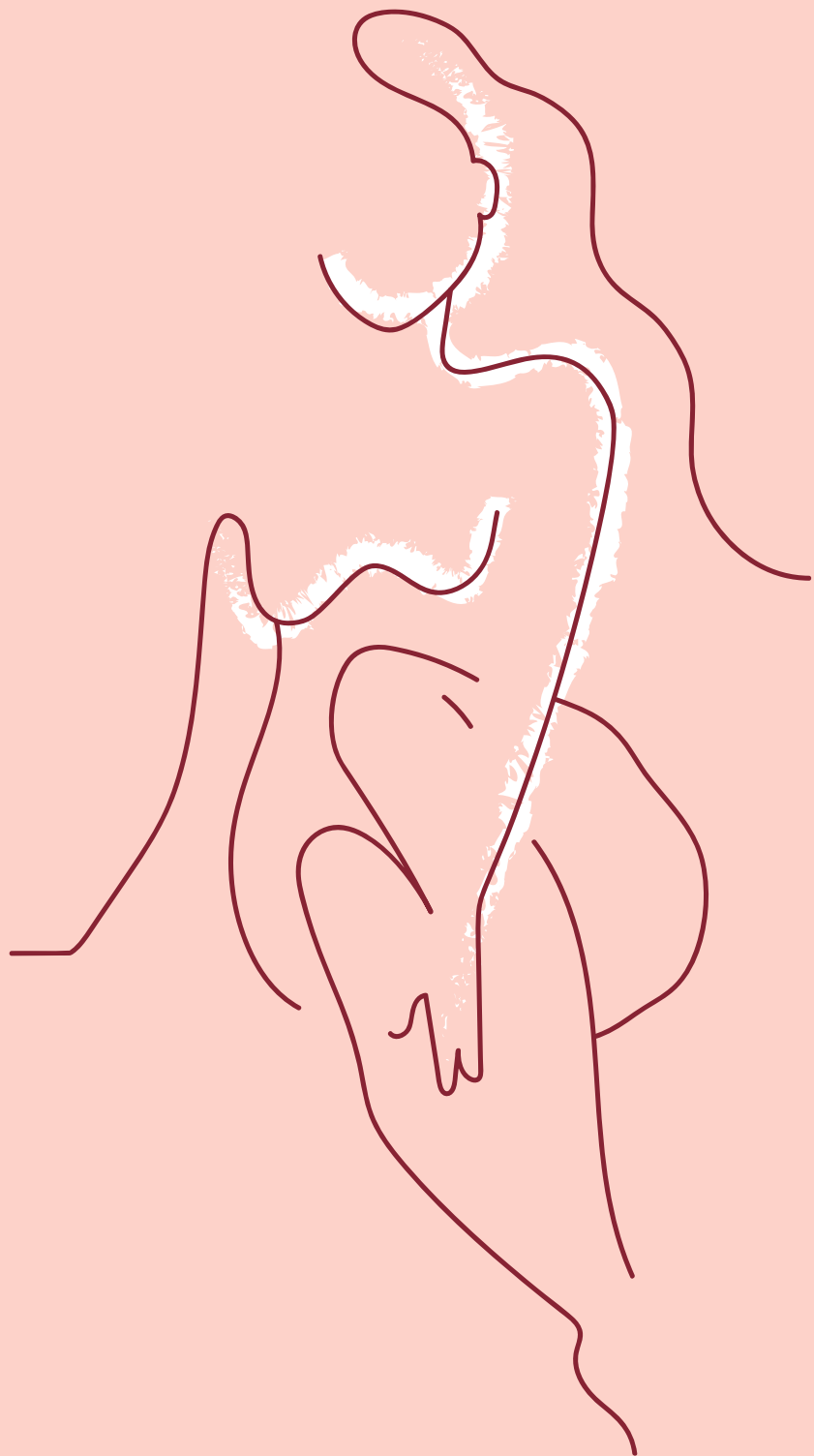
Postpartum food as medicine:

- / Principles of TCM dietetics – warming, moistening, Qi & Blood tonifying properties
- / Nutritional biochemistry – oils, proteins, probiotics, vitamins, minerals, collagen, gelatin
- / Research reveals strong evidence adequate intake of essential fatty acids, folate & iron protect against postpartum depression (e.g higher levels of DHA in breast milk correlated with lower levels of postpartum depression)
- / Study of Cretan mothers revealed diet in pregnancy high in antioxidants, essential fatty acids, vitamins, minerals, and low in sugar & trans fats significantly lowered risk of postpartum depression.

Baby blues occur in 60-70% women and generally begins 1-3 days parturition.

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