

## Postpartum Guidelines

### Lifestyle

In the immediate postpartum period, it is important to create an open, quiet atmosphere of contemplation and reflection. Before the baby comes, carefully consider what elements must be present for optimal rest and relaxation to occur. Make space physically and spiritually for the change that is occurring by planning for it. Make a cozy mommy nest for recovery and have everything you need close at hand. Arrange the basics to be taken care of for you. Ask for help.

Consider a retreat. Some women choose to spend the first 10 days in the bedroom with *\*only\** the *\*immediate\** family (you, baby, partner, new baby's siblings and maybe your mom). Tell your family and friends in advance that when the baby arrives, you'll be on retreat and will be able to celebrate with them after the initial designated retreat period.

Adopt a media fast during the first few weeks after birth, if you can. Do not use TV, movies, radio or newspapers. If you read, keep it light and limit intellectual involvement. Consider reading as a family. (In my immediate postpartum period, my husband read the myths of "The Greatness of Saturn" aloud in the afternoons as we lay together in bed.) The extra quiet will promote an attitude of reflection and gentleness and will allow everyone in the family to savor this time.

Just say no to emotional reactivity and drama. Partake only of environments and relationships you can easily digest and assimilate at this time. Angry or otherwise unsavory action, speech and thought have a profound impact; for a five-day-old newborn, one day represents one-fifth of her life. It is your job to protect your baby from this. This includes protecting yourself from it, as your baby perceives no separation between you and her.

Most of all, remember to be gentle with yourself during this phase. This is not a time to overdo or to push for accomplishment. Leave the laundry. Someone else will do those dishes eventually. Rest and make space to honor whatever comes up for you.

### Diet Recommendations

- Favor mild, naturally sweet and nourishing foods.
- All meals should be warm and nourishing, favoring lunch as the big meal of the day.
- Enjoy pickles or a small dollop of yogurt with meals in moderation as a digestive aid.
- Try to have a bowl of rice every day.
- Try to have a soup meal every day and/or side broth

### Diet Warnings

- Do not eat anything you know you do not digest well. If you can't digest it, your baby can't digest it as milk.
- Avoid particularly strong foods. Overly strong and rajasic foods give babies too much energy and/or energy they cannot use, leaving them fussy. These foods also make the new mother restless, making her feel agitated or bored during what should be a gentle, inward time of love and reflection.
- Do not use pungent foods, such as garlic or chilies. If you eat onions during this time, cook them well or caramelized them.
- Gas-producing foods, such as broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, beans, white potatoes, etc, should be avoided as they can cause colic symptoms for baby.
- Avoid strong bitter/astringent foods. Leafy greens, if taken, should be cooked until very tender and seasoned with digestive spices like cumin, coriander and fennel.
- Beware of common allergens: chicken, eggs, nuts, wheat, dairy. Don't rush to add these foods back to your diet. When you do, watch carefully for changes in baby's manor, digestion, bowel movements, skin health, etc. Build them back into your diet slowly and only when you feel good and see that the baby is adjusting well. Introduce common allergens one at a time so that if the baby has a reaction there will be no confusion as to what caused it.
- Beware of very sour foods. Pickles and yogurt can be excellent digestive aids in moderation, but many fruits we think of as sweet are often also very sour and may make the milk difficult to digest. Citrus, strawberries and blueberries are examples.
- Do not eat cold foods:
  - No ice cream, cheese, yogurt. (When dairy is acceptable, a small spoonful of yogurt with a meal can be a useful and delicious digestive aid.)
  - No salads.
  - Avoid frozen foods.
- Do not eat rough or dry goods:
  - Crackers or popcorn
  - Raw vegetables
- Do not eat old food:
  - No packaged food. There is more prana in fresh, local food.
  - Think of food leftover more than 24-36 hours as 'ama' or undigestible toxins.
- Do not eat refined sugar. It depresses the immune system, depletes organ systems and masks natural appetite.