

# SHORT GUIDE TO HOLISTIC POSTPARTUM

Embracing the full-spectrum of postpartum health



BY CAROL DA SELVA

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SACRED ∞  
WOMB RITES

# Restoring the Pillars of Family Bonding

Midwife Rachelle Garcia Seliga, creator of Innate Postpartum Care Training, teaches the ancient ways in which communities organize support for new families, centered on the nourishment and protection of the mother-baby dyad. Sadly, this structure has either disappeared from our post-industrial society, or been transferred to complexes and services such as schools, daycares, and hospitals.

**“We are outsourcing our personal and most precious bonding time to institutions and “professionals”.**

The harsh truth is: no one can make a better home for a child than their own mothers and fathers. I say this not to make us feel guilty for having to go back to our jobs months after giving birth because of financial needs. Neither to deny our need for time away from our children and missing our lives without the responsibility of parenthood.

I state this only with the intention of bringing awareness and acceptance to the fact that a child needs their parents (more directly the mother) on a *biological* level. Meanwhile, *culturally* we have been accepting the lie that a good daycare, a good nanny, a grandparent, or good school can compensate for our absence.

**“There is a very successful overculture agenda of disrupting and destroying the family nucleus, and traumatizing our mothers and children.**

# Facing the Crisis: How Society Fails

## Mothers, Babies, and Families

We do not even need to look at our children to notice that this is not working. Just look at mothers and the family structures that we are cultivating in our communities to find the deprecating narratives of the nightmares of parenthood, the caricatures of exhausted moms juggling a household, a job, and childcare, and sad dads who feel like a failure, lost, or left out of the picture completely.

- ✓ The U.S. is still the only developed nation that does not have a federal mandate for paid maternity leave. Only 49% of women who worked during pregnancy in the U.S. reported accessing any paid leave after childbirth. The rates are significantly lower for Black and Hispanic mothers and those in lower-income brackets.
- ✓ In the UK, around 63% of children aged 0 to 4 received formal childcare in 2023. On average, children aged 0 to 4 spent about 22.5 hours per week in formal childcare. In the US, over 50% of infants are in some form of regular childcare arrangement.
- ✓ Postpartum depression affects about 1 in 8 mothers in the U.S., and it is more prevalent among Black women compared to other racial groups.

Although this is all sadly true, we do not need to accept this as our reality as we step into parenthood. In fact, becoming a parent is an invitation to take radical responsibility for all the circumstances we create for ourselves and our children.

# Breaking the Cycle: Reimagining Parenthood and Postpartum Support

Instead of contributing to victimizing narratives and catastrophic realities, we can start seeking out solutions and building new (or ancient) paradigms that center the health of mothers, babies, and families, supported by their communities.

**“A newborn mother needs her baby as much as the newborn baby needs her mother.”**

- ⊙ *What cultural narratives about postpartum care need to change for society to better support the mother-baby dyad?*
- ⊙ *What lessons can we learn from societies where community-centered postpartum care is the norm?*
- ⊙ *What role should extended family and community members play in postpartum care? How can we facilitate these roles in nuclear family settings?*
- ⊙ *What are the barriers to building a communal postpartum care model in today's urbanized, individualistic society?*
- ⊙ *What would a postpartum care “village” look like in today's world?*
- ⊙ *What services and practices would it include?*
- ⊙ *What does an ideal postpartum experience look like for mothers and babies, and what steps can we take to make that a reality for more families?*

## What You Can Do

Reflecting about those questions is a big step for finding out where you stand on this broad topic. It is likely that as you find the answers to those questions, you begin attracting the people that you need to support you on the way. Situations and decision-making become easier once you know what is non-negotiable and what still needs to be thought through.

But before we start tackling the big societal problems, we need to make sure we do our part by taking care of ourselves first. Long-lasting changes begin with our individual actions, inner work, and strengthening the family unit. The more you do for yourselves as parents, the more you are able to do for your children, and later for the community.

Following are a few ways you can integrate holistic and community postpartum support in your family.



# 1. Nourishment

You just grew an entire human, whom you are now probably feeding with your milk. Eating and drinking during the postpartum period are your best chances to replenish yourself and mitigate long-term deficiencies.

However, nourishment is much more than nutrition. It involves anything that makes us feel fulfilled, joyful, and whole. Anything we are exposed to in our environment is penetrating our bodies that are still very much open and vulnerable from giving birth. Think of creating a soft, silent, gentle, protected, and warm environment that would best support yourself and your baby to bond and heal.

## **Eat Warm, Healing Foods:**

- ☉ Prioritize easily digestible, nutrient-dense meals like soups, stews, and broths.
- ☉ Include foods rich in iron, protein, and healthy fats (e.g., dark leafy greens, eggs, salmon, avocados).
- ☉ Focus on anti-inflammatory spices like turmeric, ginger, and cinnamon.



*Tip:*

Organize a meal train during pregnancy to stock your freezer with nourishing meals, or ask people to drop off freshly cooked food for you and your family.

### **Hydration:**

- Ⓢ Drink plenty of water and herbal teas (e.g., nettle, chamomile, red raspberry leaf).
- Ⓢ Try lactation-supporting drinks like fennel seeds tea or coconut water.

### **Support Gut Health:**

- Ⓢ Include fermented foods (yogurt, sauerkraut) and probiotics to boost digestion.

### **External stimuli:**

- Ⓢ Avoid screens and be very conscious of what you are letting into your impressionable psyche. All that is being imprinted in your cells is possibly going to affect the way your body readjusts and heals.
- Ⓢ Reading a feel-good book, knitting or crafting, singing and playing music, or journaling can be better ways to regulate your nervous system without overwhelming it with external information to process.



### **Visitors:**

- Ⓢ Be very cautious of who you invite into your space during your first 40 days. Everyone wants to meet your baby, but remember it is *your* baby, and you can decide who gets to be there and when. Being firm and clear about your boundaries and needs is not rude, and you do not need to feel guilty about it.

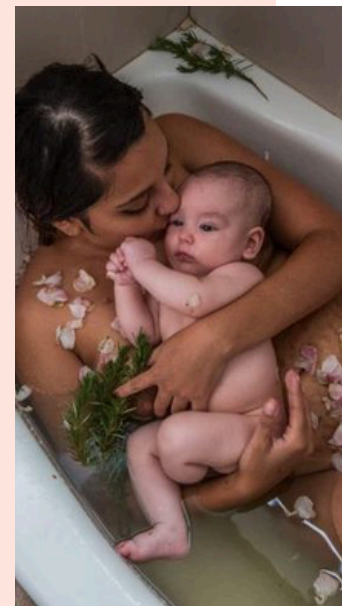
## **Skin-to-skin:**

- Ⓢ Avoid putting on clothes and dressing your baby. Skin-to-skin really means skin-to-skin! Your baby cannot regulate her body temperature yet, and you are her thermostat. Plus, if you are breastfeeding, it makes it much easier than wearing bras and breast pads that will suffocate and put pressure on your breasts. Your baby does not need cute little onesies. She needs to slowly transition from being inside your body. The best way is to continue giving her the sensation of touching her mother's skin.

## **Bathing:**

- Ⓢ **For the mother:** Some traditions say it's better to wait for 7 to 10 days before bathing, some say you should wait until the lochia (postpartum bleeding) stops, others say that you should stay away from any bathing at all during your first 40 days.

Although there is no rule for showering or bathing during postpartum, if you are not feeling ready for a shower or a bath, you can always opt for a sponge or washcloth without leaving your bedroom. Some women find a sitz bath with healing herbs very helpful for perineum relief. Others will prefer a full body immersion with healing herbs the day after birth. Listen to your body and what feels right to you.





## **Bathing:**

© **For the baby:** Immediate bathing of your newborn baby is not necessary, and can be delayed for at least the first 7 days. In fact, it allows the baby to retain the protective vernix layer which has antibacterial properties and helps to regulate body temperature, and even support skin health and bonding. Again, you can opt for a quick and gentle sponge or washcloth bath instead of full submersion, avoiding interfering too much with the skin-to-skin transitioning, and losing body heat. Prefer using plain water and avoid soap and skin products, since the baby's skin is extremely permeable and sensitive.



Baby covered in vernix enjoys a skin-to-skin moment with mom

## **Placenta Consumption:**

The placenta is packed with nutrients like iron, protein, and vitamins, as well as hormones that helped sustain your pregnancy. The mammal instinct of consuming the placenta is known anecdotally to help replenish your body, help with milk supply, boost energy, and balance postpartum hormones (potentially reducing the risk of baby blues or postpartum depression). It's like giving your body back some of the incredible nutrients it worked hard to share during pregnancy. Here are some ways you can benefit from the nutritional richness of your placenta:

- Ⓢ **Placenta Pills:** The placenta is cut into small pieces, dehydrated, then ground into fine powder and finally encapsulated. The advantage is that you just need to swallow it without tasting it, although you might lose some of the nutrients during the dehydration process.
- Ⓢ **Raw Consumption:** Believed to retain the most benefits, you can eat it freshly out of the womb (thinly sliced with soy sauce tastes just like sushi!), or freeze small pieces to be blended into smoothies later.
- Ⓢ **Cooked:** Just like any other meat, you can add it to stews, sauces, and other dishes.

© **Tincture:** Requires just a small piece of the placenta to make a tincture, which means you can still consume the rest in other ways. It is steeped in alcohol for a few weeks and you can keep the tincture for a long time.

*Tip:*

There are free videos and resources you can find online that teach how to make your own placenta medicines. In case you don't want to consume it or you're still not sure, you can always keep it in the freezer and decide later. If you end up not consuming it, at least give it a nice burial place and ceremony to acknowledge its importance and magic!



## 2. Rest

After birth, your uterus, your organs, and all the pelvic muscles, bones, and its ligaments are struggling to go back into their places. This means whatever movements you make (getting up, walking, carrying a baby, sitting, etc.) is putting extra strain on your body and might interfere with their correct realignment. Additionally, all your hormones and milk production rely heavily on your optimally functioning nervous system.

It is true that many women experience a surge of energy and creativity on the first days after birth, probably due to an oxytocin rush. However, try to use this energy to bond with your baby, and resist the urge to get out of bed and conquer the world as much as you can. This will help you come down from this rush gently instead of crashing and feeling suddenly depleted.

Other women might feel that no matter how much they rest, they still feel tired. As obvious as it sounds, this simply means they need more rest. Even after your first 40 days, not only your body, but your whole life and your family are still slowly adjusting. All of it can be not just physically but mentally and emotionally exhausting. Give it time and get as much rest as you need.



## The 555 Rule:

- © **5 days in the bed:** spend the first 5 days *lying down as much as possible* to rest and bond with your baby. Remember, you will be bare chested, mainly focusing on breastfeeding and skin-to-skin, which means your bed is the best place to be.
- © **5 days on the bed:** Gradually transition to *sitting or being near the bed*, engaging in light activities, but still prioritizing rest.
- © **5 days around the bed:** Start *moving around the house* gently, but avoid strenuous activities or even going out in your backyard.

## Delegate tasks:

- © At least for the first 40 days, do not do any chores, and arrange for other people to take care of everything: shopping, childcare (if you have other children), cooking, cleaning. Try not to feel guilty or worried about it. Remember that this is just a phase, and soon you will be able to do those things again. If you need something to be done very specifically, explain to these people exactly how you would like it to be done (e.g. how to fold the laundry, separate the trash, feed the pets, etc.) If asking for help is really hard for you or if you do not have the energy to do it, ask your partner, a friend, or even your doula to organize a schedule so that you have some helping hands every day.

*Tip:*

If napping while baby naps is too hard, try reading a good book or listening to a relaxation meditation while lying down. It might even put you to sleep...

## 3. Warmth

After birth, your basal body temperature drops as progesterone levels decrease. In most traditions, it is strongly recommended to keep the mother's body always warm. As discussed in the nourishment section, warmth also applies to the whole environment: people, imagery, sounds, textures, tastes.

© **Moxibustion:** Used in Traditional Chinese Medicine, this mugwort stick is burned near acupuncture points so that the heat and the medicinal properties of the herb help improve blood circulation, regulate hormones, and alleviate pain. It helps with uterine recovery, supports lactation, reduces fatigue and stress, and enhances immune function.



© **Hot water bottles:** Cuddle with it, make it your best friend, don't spend any second of your day without one nearby!

© **Clothing:** As mentioned before, the skin-to-skin contact is your priority during the first postpartum days. But as soon as you begin walking around the house, make sure you always have extra layers, especially on your feet, head, back, and lower belly. Prefer 100% wool fabrics, which will keep all the warmth in, while allowing the skin to breathe.

## **Yoni Steaming:**

- ⊙ This is a very simple but extremely effective way to retain warmth that promotes many other benefits, such as shrinking hemorrhoids, clearing lochia, restoring and repositioning the vaginal canal, the cervix, uterus, and other organs (avoiding prolapse), reducing swelling, and releasing oxytocin. It is recommended that you wait at least 5 days after vaginal birth and six weeks after cesarean birth before beginning your steaming routine. If you have vaginal stitches or tears, wait until they are fully healed.
  
- ⊙ You can steam every day, once or twice a day, for 10 minutes, preferably once before going to sleep in the evening. You can use plain water, or add herbs. Herbs that you can safely mix or use separately are: lavender, nettle, lemon peels, mugwort, astragalus, and peppermint.
  
- ⊙ To prepare your steaming, boil 1 cup of water for every tablespoon of dried herb. Let it steep for another 5 to 10 minutes. Test the temperature by hovering your wrist above the bowl. It shouldn't be too hot. Then crouch above your steaming bowl (or use a steaming stool) for 10 minutes. Do not forget to cloak your whole body (from neck to toes) with a thick blanket, in order to keep the steam and warmth in. Also, wear socks, and cover your head with a hat or towel. After finishing, keep the blanket wrapped around your body, go straight to bed, and make sure to soak in all that warmth!

## 4. Body Work

While pregnancy gives us a few months to grow and adapt to the changes in our body, birth is an abrupt transition from our pregnant bodies to a postpartum body. This can leave us feeling a little “scattered”, fragmented, or in a “limbo” state.

After your first forty days, you might want to consider receiving hands-on care and moving your body gently and intentionally to “land” back into your body. External guidance and support about your body’s structural, hormonal, and energetic conditions will help you reorient yourself and give you more confidence to slowly come back into your new body.

When engaging in simple activities such as walking, sitting, light stretching, dancing, or simply holding your baby, it is essential that you perform them with curiosity and awareness of how your new body functions. Having your own internal assessment of your new structure will be useful when talking to your body worker so they can give you a more personalized treatment.



*Tip:*

On your baby shower list, include donations for hiring a postpartum doula, body work sessions, or gift cards for your favorite yoga or pilates studio.



## Self-assessment questions

*What changed in your posture?*

*What changes in your body are influencing the way you walk, sit, and move?*

*How are you carrying your baby?*



*Do you feel any pain or discomfort? What does the pain feel like? Where exactly is it coming from?*

*How is your sleep quality, and how is that affecting your health?*

*How do you feel your bones, muscles, and internal organs are rearranging?*

*Do you have any scar tissue? How does that feel?*

*When you move, what do you feel? Are there any positions or movements that feel good and help you release? Are there any positions or movements that are too difficult?*

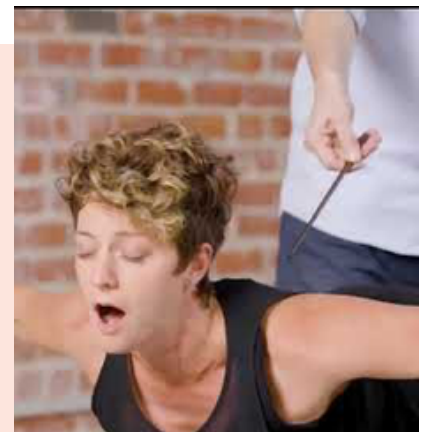
*Are you struggling with any issues such as incontinence, prolapse, mastitis, or any condition that needs medical attention?*

Collect as much data as you can as you move through your day. Any time you remember, pause, go inwards, and ask yourself “**how do I feel in my body right now?**”. This will not only help you build **interoception**, but also hold space and make your body feel safe for the healing that is happening.

Below are a few of the many body work techniques you can try once you have built that inner connection with your new body:

© **Chiropractics:** The hands-on spinal and pelvic adjustments can help alleviate back pain, neck pain, headaches, and other conditions stemming from misalignments or imbalances in the spine. One of the modalities, called **Network Spinal**, is a more energetic approach that uses light touches along the spine by eliciting specific healing waves in the body, reorganizing stored stress patterns and trauma.

© **Cranio-sacral:** This is a gentle technique that focuses on the bones, membranes, and cerebrospinal fluid surrounding the brain and spinal cord. By applying light touch, it alleviates stress, reduces pain, improves mobility, and enhances overall well-being. It can be particularly beneficial for addressing issues such as headaches, trauma, postpartum recovery, and emotional imbalances.

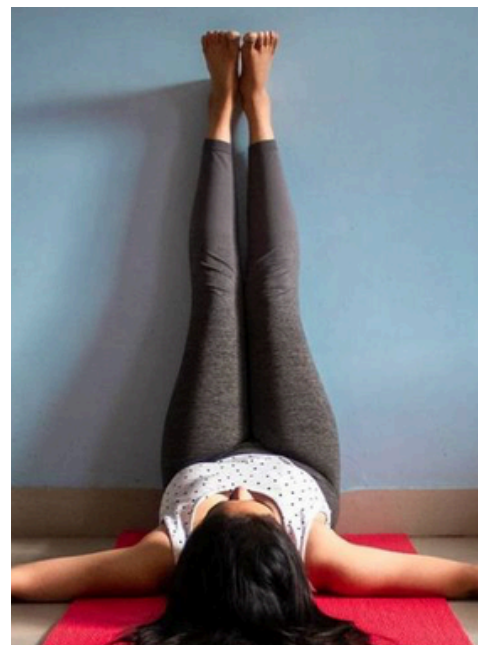


- © **Internal Pelvic Work:** This work involves internal manipulation through the vaginal or rectal walls to release tension, improve muscle tone, and restore alignment in the pelvic region. It is particularly effective for addressing conditions like pelvic pain, incontinence, scar tissue from tears or episiotomies, and pelvic organ prolapse. Be aware that this technique can be somewhat invasive, and requires deep trust in your own body and in the body worker.
  
- © **Belly Binding:** This is a postpartum recovery practice rooted in various cultures that involves wrapping the abdomen with a long piece of cloth. It provides support to the abdominal muscles and organs, promotes uterine contraction, and reduces swelling. It also improves posture by enhancing core stability, and offers emotional comfort by providing a sense of grounding and containment. Some methods can be paired with herbal pastes or oils for additional healing benefits.
  
- © **Massage:** The well-known therapeutic benefits of massage are tripled during postpartum. There are many modalities to choose from, but the **Ayurvedic** technique particularly focuses on the principles discussed above of warmth and nourishment. Warm oils, herbs, and specific techniques are used to support physical and emotional recovery, addressing the unique needs of the new mother. You can also practice self-massage with warm oils, or ask your partner to do so for you. The mere action of rubbing your whole body with oil will be immensely beneficial for establishing a self-care routine and deepening your interoception practice.

- © **Myofascial Release:** Fascia is the connective tissue that surrounds and supports muscles, organs, and bones. During pregnancy and childbirth, the fascia can become tight, restricted, or develop adhesions, leading to pain, stiffness, and impaired movement. This technique works by gently stretching and releasing the fascia by applying sustained pressure and gentle stretching. It can be very helpful for C-section or perineal scars, and releasing any stuck energies and and emotion.
  
- © **Yoga:** If you already practiced Yoga before pregnancy, you probably know what to do and why. If you didn't, it might be a good moment to start, as long as you have an experienced instructor that understands the needs and limitations of a postpartum body. Because it also incorporates breathwork and some form of meditation, it also supports mental health, hormonal balance, and it can be a good place to slowly transition from being at home to getting out into the world without too much stimulation.
  
- © **Pilates:** This is ideal for rebuilding strength, stability, and alignment, since it is a low-impact exercise method that focuses on core activation and pelvic floor muscles. If you are dealing with diastasis recti and pelvic instability, back and shoulder tension from breastfeeding or carrying a baby, pilates can do wonders for you. Like mentioned above in the Yoga section, if you had already practiced before, there are exercises you can do on your own at home. But if you are just starting or struggling with a specific issue, choose an instructor that can adapt the exercises to your needs.

© **Qi Gong:** This is an extremely gentle practice of slow, flowing movements, combined with breathwork, and focused intention helps you become more aware of how the energy moves in your body and field. In Traditional Chinese Medicine, Qi Gong helps to replenish depleted energy (or "qi") and support the body's natural healing processes. It is totally safe to practice on your own (as long as you respect your own limitations), and you can find free YouTube videos that teach you the basic movements.

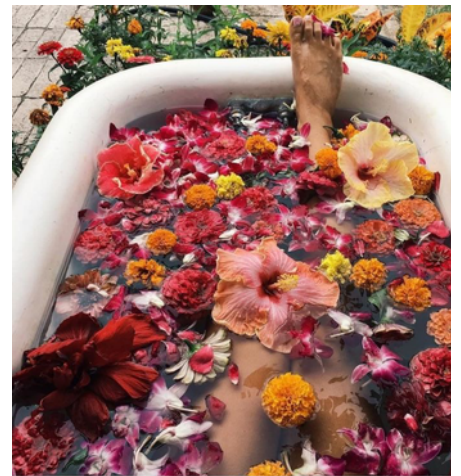
© **Acupuncture:** Another Traditional Chinese Medicine technique that stimulates specific points on the body, and helps reorganize and direct the energy in the meridians (the channels through which the energy flows). It can be very helpful for fatigue, hormonal imbalances, pain, and mood disorders like postpartum depression or anxiety. It can also help regulate blood flow, promote lactation, and support the recovery of the uterus and pelvic floor.



## 5. Herbal Allies

Humans have been using plants as medicine for millennia. From kitchen herbs to entheogenic plants, choosing to work with them requires a very refined and sensitive approach. Plants work on a high frequency level, acting on our physical, emotional, mental, and energetic bodies. Inviting plant spirits to be your allies can result in beautiful, deep relationships. I always advise consulting an experienced herbalist, especially while pregnant and breastfeeding.

You can invite herbal medicine to work with you through a variety of ways. It can be as simple as a cup of tea, or a stronger infusion. You can add your herbs to food in heartwarming stews, or fresh salads, or anoint yourself with a herb-infused oil. They can be helpful as a salve for cracked nipples, as a syrup against colds, as a sitz bath to aid with perineal healing, or as tinctures for endless purposes. And let's not forget aromatherapy with essential oils. Below you will find a few ideas of how to use these friends for postpartum healing.



© **Postpartum Infusions:** One of the ways to prepare an infusion is adding 4 cups of boiling water to 1 cup of dried herb and letting it steep with a tight lid on for 4 to 8 hours. Make it before you go to bed so it can be ready to drink for the next day. Mix equal parts of these herbs to make a blend, or use them separately for your infusions:

**Stinging Nettle:** Rich in Iron, protein, and helps with milk production.

**Raspberry Leaf:** Tones the uterine muscles, and enhances milk production.

**Red Clover:** Helps with liver health, hormonal balance, and milk supply.

**Blessed Thistle:** Great for emotional support and lactation.

**Motherwort:** Relieves cramping, heavy bleeding, and helps with emotions and trauma from birth.

**Lady's Mantle:** Alleviates cramping, great for restoring energy after birth.

**Fennel Seeds:** Helps with digestion and lactation.



© **Sitz Bath:** Please use this only if there are no signs of infection and when your tears or stitches are fully healed. These herbs have soothing, anti-inflammatory, and astringent properties, helping the stretched tissues from your perineum recover smoothly.

If you don't have a bathtub, you can use an inflatable kids pool or another container that covers the entirety of your hips as you sit in it so that your body can fully soak in the warmth and the properties of the herbs. I do not recommend the small sitz bath containers that cover only the perineum, but if that is the best you can find, try it anyways.

To prepare your sitz bath, blend together:

- ½ cup yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)
- ½ cup calendula (*Calendula officinalis*)
- ½ cup lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*)
- ¼ cup witch hazel leaf (*Hamamelis virginiana*)
- ¼ cup rose (*Rosa* spp.)
- ¼ cup St. John's wort flowers (*Hypericum perforatum*)



When you are ready to make your bath, pour ½ a gallon of boiling water over one cup of the blend. Let it steep for at least half an hour and up to 8 hours. Strain it into the tub and fill the rest with regular bath water. Sit for at least 20 minutes, remembering to keep yourself warm at all times!



© **Nipple Salve:** This salve helps soothe sore nipples during the first weeks of breastfeeding. If you suspect infection, or observe severe inflammation and cracks, consult with a specialist.

You will need:

- 2 tablespoons calendula flower
- 2 tablespoons marshmallow root
- 1 tablespoon plantain leaf
- 1 tablespoon yarrow flower
- 1 cup olive oil
- 1 ounce beeswax
- cheesecloth for straining



Directions:

In a double boiler (bain-marie), mix the herbs and the olive oil. Let it sit on low heat for a couple of hours – the water shouldn't boil and the mixture should be slightly warm. Strain the herbs with a cheesecloth into a sterile, dry container. In your clean double boiler, mix your infused oil with the beeswax until it all melts. Pour the mixture into your container and let it cool before closing.

Apply to your nipples after every feeding, and wipe out with warm soapy water before feeding.

## 6. Ritual & Spirituality

Rituals for protecting and welcoming the mother and baby exist in many cultures, usually tied to a spiritual or religious reason. Using symbols, songs, words, dance, art, and other power tools, rituals can bypass the logical brain and go straight to the subconscious mind. It is my belief that sometimes things need to be dealt with in other dimensions of ourselves in order to be manifested into the material world.

© **Closing of the bones:** This is a ritual/ceremony used in different cultures in which the postpartum woman's body is wrapped with large pieces of cloth in order to ground her back into her body. In some rituals, she also receives a massage, and goes into a sweat lodge to release all tension and let any grief or pain out. It helps the body to process the trauma from birth, and to find closure to step into her new self.

© **Energy Healing:** Energy begets matter. If there are energetic misalignments in a person's field, it is very likely that they will soon begin to manifest in their physical body. This is what I have been shown throughout my practice and study of multidimensional



healing, and what modern science has been proving. There are numerous modalities of energy healing that can help reorganize your energy field (this includes thoughts and emotions) that might also bring physical healing or relief. Find a reliable and experienced practitioner to help you, especially if you can feel that you have done a lot on the physical plane and are struggling to see results.

- © **Prayer:** Prayer is simply using words and intention to direct your energy towards a benevolent outcome. You do not have to pray to God if you do not believe in it. You can pray to Divine Love to the Great Mother, to the Earth, to your favorite river, to the water, to your Guardian Angel, to your Highest Self, to your well ancestors, to the Universe, to the Hydrogen molecules, or whatever benevolent force you believe in. Remember, our intention here is to bypass your rational brain and use your mammalian brain to connect to what is underlying the situation. When you pray —truthfully pray— you are sending waves from your heart and brain straight into your field and environment, almost like a self-energy-healing session.
  
- © **Placenta Burial:** This is practiced in many cultures, and it can even be done with your children when they are bigger (if you keep your placenta frozen for 3 years like I did!). You can choose a nice tree to be planted on top, or you can even spread the dehydrated powder on a specific site. You will feel the energetic significance of it when you do it, knowing that such an important part of you and your baby is now being buried. Make it a moment of closure, gratitude, and respect for life itself.

## 7. Emotional & Mental Health

It goes without saying that emotions and thoughts are running wild during the first weeks postpartum. Major internal and external changes, brutal hormonal fluctuations, paired with sleep deprivation, sore nipples, and perhaps a side of perineal tear. This is a recipe for breakdown that most of us will go through whether we are prepared or not.

This is not to make you dread the postpartum period. On the contrary, the more we normalize the madness, the faster we can recognize symptoms, ask for help and prevent more severe complications.

I always say that the body is the house of the mind. If you feel good in your body, if you're taking good care of it, and you are actively minimizing trauma, there is a greater chance of your mental health remaining stable. This is to say that if you followed the tips listed so far, you are already doing yourself a huge favor. However, it goes both ways: if you suddenly cannot manage the emotional and mental load of postpartum, it will be difficult to have motivation to take good care of your body.

Below are some ways you can support your emotional and mental healing. But first, you might want to check out **this guide I made for Holistic Perinatal Mental Health!**



© **Birth Story & Debrief:** So much of our mental health goes into how we perceive facts. Our core beliefs shape how we perceive situations, which create thoughts, that will then trigger feelings and emotional reactions. Recollecting your perception of the birth is a powerful tool to digest the whole experience, organize your thoughts, and have a better grasp of how this is affecting the way you feel.

As soon as you can, start journaling or talking about the birth to someone close to you (even better if this person wasn't at the birth). Avoid hearing from people who were present about their view on the birth for the first few days. This will help you to create your story with the least interference. If you cannot avoid that, be very aware of other people's perceptions and opinions and keep them separate from your own. Even if their comments are positive (for example "you were so strong and brave"), you might not feel the same way. There might be blank parts or flashes. Let them be so, and avoid asking what happened. They might come back later the more you digest and process it. Once you are feeling confident about your version of the story, you can invite others' personal experiences too.

If you happen to have a difficult birth and you feel you need more support as you recount the birth story, it is a good idea to talk to a birth worker who can debrief your story with you. They will use active listening and hold space for you to safely retrieve those memories.

© **Somatic Release:** Processing the birth through words can only do so much. Trauma is stored in the body, and the best way to release it (in my humble opinion) is to let the body do its thing while being held safely. Trauma here is not defined as a tragic event only, but as any event that puts a strain in your nervous system. Too much, too fast, as any birth can be.

Search for a qualified professional that can guide you to somatically release the stress and tension that are still accumulated in your body. If you cannot find one or cannot afford it, there are other simple exercises that you can do like shaking and tremoring, EFT (or tapping), or check out [my favorite way of letting the body self-heal here.](#)

© **Finding An Outlet:** Apart from letting your tears roll free, using creativity as an outlet is also a good option. Expressing and registering your feelings through art, poetry, journaling, music, dance, all of what makes you move through the density and brings you tiny bits of joy counts.

**“It is hard, it can be scary,  
and it won’t always be like this!”**

## Final Thoughts

A happy and healthy mother makes a happy and healthy baby. Surround yourself with the most warmth and support you can get, without any guilt. By doing this, you are prioritizing your long-term well-being and a mother-child connection that surpasses any obstacles.

My wish is that you find joy and beauty in your postpartum healing. Thank you for being part of the revolution, and working towards a humanity that centers mothers and children, and honors the family unit.



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## Resources & References

\*All pictures (except for cover and page 30) were found on the internet.

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