



## Your “Golden Month”

“Golden Month” is an investment in the health and happiness of you and your child. Be the best mom you can be by giving yourself time to heal!

The Chinese refer to the month following the birth of a child as a woman's “Golden Month”. It is a time to rest and rebuild the body. By focusing on prevention, we guard against potential disease in the future. This recovery time is for all women, not just those who had a difficult childbirth or are feeling particularly depleted. The first year in a baby's life is full of challenges, and can be both rewarding and exhausting.

At Whole Family Health, we offer a Postpartum Package of 3 home acupuncture treatments to address any problems and help you recover more quickly. Whether or not you choose to incorporate acupuncture in your postpartum recovery, there are a number of self-care measures that you can take to strengthen your body:

- Make sure to get adequate rest and avoid exhaustion.
- Avoid the cold--this includes both food and air temperature. Avoid cold foods like ice cream and ice water. Be careful to bundle up in the winter, and avoid sitting in front of a fan or air conditioner in the summer.
- Eat lots of Qi and Blood nourishing foods.

# Useful Acupressure Points



## Gall Bladder 21 to Aid Letdown

There is something your partner can do to help you with breastfeeding! Gall Bladder 21 promotes efficient breast feeding by stimulating the letdown reflex. This is an area where many women store lots of tension, and is a good point for a general massage.

To locate Gall Bladder 21, draw an imaginary line between the bony prominence of the neck (C7) and the top of the shoulder joint. Gall Bladder 21 is located midway along this line, at the highest point on the shoulder muscle. Feel for the most tender spot in this area.

At the beginning of each nursing session, have your support person stand behind you and place moderate pressure, either with thumbs or elbows, on both points. Discontinue pressure after nursing is well established.



## Spleen 6 for Afterpains

Afterpains are cramps that occur in the first few days following childbirth. They are a result of the uterus shrinking back to its normal size. While these are usually mild for first-time moms, they tend to get worse with each successive pregnancy and can be quite intense.

Pressure on the acupoint Spleen 6 can greatly reduce the pain from these cramps, with some women calling the results "magical".

Spleen 6 is located 4 finger-breadths above the medial malleolus (the bony prominence on the inside of your ankle), just off the shin bone. Feel for the most tender spot in this area.

To use this point, apply pressure at Spleen 6 every time you begin breastfeeding. The best way to accomplish this to have your support person apply strong pressure to both legs as you begin nursing. If this is not possible, you can do the acupressure yourself for 1-3 minutes just before you begin nursing.

*For more suggestions on treating afterpains, see the tea recipe on page 4.*

# Food Therapy for a Fuller Recovery

Food therapy in the postpartum period is focused on rebuilding the Qi and Blood lost during pregnancy and child-birth. Qi and blood deficiency can manifest as fatigue, hair loss, insomnia, postpartum depression, and many other illnesses.

Qi is the term used in traditional Chinese medicine to describe the body's energy, which flows along meridians. Blood is seen as a condensed form of Qi that nourishes the body. To successfully build Blood and Qi, it is important to have a strong digestive system capable of extracting all the nutrients from food.

In traditional Chinese medicine, the digestive system is imagined as a pot of boiling soup. To digest foods properly, the body must bring food up to this temperature. Therefore, cooked grains, and lightly cooked or steamed vegetables are easier to digest than raw or icy cold foods. This is the reason we eat chicken noodle soup and drink warm liquids when we are sick!

The foods listed in the charts below are especially good at building Qi and Blood. For some recipe ideas, see the following page.

Foods that tonify Qi	
Grains	barley, buckwheat, corn, lentils, oats*, rice*, sweet rice*, wheat bran
Vegetables	asparagus, button mushrooms, cabbage, eggplant, peas, potato*, pumpkin, shitake mushroom, squash*, sweet potato*, tomato, yam*
Fruit	apple, cherry*, date*, fig*, grape*, raisins*
Bean products	black soya, kidney, tofu*
Nuts & Seeds	almond, black sesame, coconut (meat), peanut, walnut
Meat/Dairy	beef*, chicken*, ham*, lamb*, chicken egg
Oils and Condiments	honey, malt sugar, molasses*

\*Especially useful to tonify Spleen Qi

Foods that nourish Blood	
Grains	barley, corn, oats, rice, sweet rice, wheat bran
Vegetables	alfalfa sprout, artichoke*, beets*, button mushroom, cabbage, celery, dark leafy greens, shitake mushroom, spinach
Fruit	apple, apricot, avocado*, date*, fig, grape*, raisins*
Beans	aduki, black soya, kidney
Nuts & Seeds	almond, black sesame
Meat/Dairy	beef*, pork*, chicken egg
Herbs	parley
Beverages	soy milk

# Think Soup!

Warm soups are particularly nourishing for a woman during her postpartum recovery. They are easy to make, easy to digest, and quickly build qi and blood. Here are two recipes to get you started.

## Egg Drop Soup with Spinach (4 servings)

2 tablespoons olive oil  
1 tablespoon minced garlic  
6 cups vegetable stock  
1 pound frozen spinach, defrosted and chopped  
4 eggs  
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Cook garlic in olive oil in medium saucepan. Add chopped spinach and vegetable stock. Bring to a boil. Beat eggs and stir in grated parmesan. Add the eggs in a steady stream, stirring constantly. Cook a few minutes until eggs are scrambled.

(From *How to Cook Everything Vegetarian* by Mark Bittman)

*Egg yolks have been used traditionally for recovery after a long illness or after childbirth. They nourish Qi and Blood and tonify the Kidneys.*

## Chicken Soup (8 servings)

1 whole chicken, cut up  
1 onion chopped  
4-6 carrots, chopped  
4-6 pieces celery, chopped

Soak chicken in cold, salted water for 20 minutes. Wash off chicken, place in soup kettle and cover with clean water. Bring to a boil then lower temperature to low. Partially

cover and simmer, skimming water, until chicken is tender. Remove chicken from the broth and let cool before chopping into small pieces. Add chopped onions, carrots and celery and cook on low until tender. Season with salt and pepper and return chopped chicken to the pot. Can be served with noodles or rice.

\*\*To make this an herbal soup, add 40 grams of angelica and 60 grams of motherwort (both available at Whole Family Health).

Motherwort helps the uterus regain its normal size and tone and prevents excessive bleeding. Angelica moves and nourishes blood.

*Chicken warms and nourishes the Spleen, enriches and nourishes Qi and Blood and tonifies the Kidney and Essence.*

## Tea for Afterpains (1 serving)

Bring 1 cup of water to boil. Add 1 tablespoon dark brown sugar (Sucanat is best because of its higher molasses content) and mix. Let cool slightly and drink as tea.

This tea is easy to make. For women in their second pregnancy, consider taking some brown sugar with you to the hospital. Drink this tea any time you are experiencing afterpains. Try drinking it preventively, for example, before you begin breastfeeding.

*For more suggestions on treating afterpains, turn to page 2.*



**Whole Family Health**

Leah Olson, L.Ac.

920.574.0447

345 E. Wisconsin Avenue  
Appleton, WI 54911