



# The Golden Month

## Postpartum Guide

In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), the postpartum period is a delicate time where nurturing the mother is just as important as caring for the newborn. How a woman recovers during the fourth trimester (typically the 6 weeks after birth) will have an impact on her future health and wellbeing.

Following birth, a woman is in a vulnerable state of depleted Qi and Blood. Pregnancy is draining on the mother's body. Babies are like leaches, extracting vital nutrients from the mother for their growth and development. If the mother is not in an optimal state before conception, this depletion will potentially have a greater impact during postpartum and beyond.

The goal is to replenish the Qi and Blood with adequate rest and a nutritious diet. These vital substances are essential in assisting with recovery, wound healing and the healthy production of breast milk. They also play a role in how a woman will cope emotionally during the huge transition into motherhood.

Some tips for postpartum are:

## **MEAL PREPARATION**

Stock your freezer with meals. In your 3rd trimester make a double batch of what you are already cooking and freeze it. Trust me, your future self will thank you!

## **HOUSEHOLD CHORES**

Organise for family and friends to assist with cooking and cleaning (ask for help instead of presents). Create a roster of support. Outsource where possible. Hire a cleaner or arrange a food delivery service.

## **STAY WARM**

When the Qi and Blood are weak, our immune and digestive function is lowered. In particular it is important to keep the feet, abdomen and neck covered to prevent any invasion of cold into the uterus and joints. Be mindful of cold airconditioning or sitting around with wet hair after a shower.

The warmth also improves oxytocin levels (our love hormone) and reduces the adrenaline family of hormones. When our oxytocin levels are high, we feel more loved and connected and it assists in bonding with baby.

## **EAT NOURISHING, WARM FOODS (AND DRINKS)**

Due to the weakened digestive system, it is important to consume easy to digest, warm foods such as soups and stews. This will ensure that nutrients will be easily absorbed. Incorporating bone broth and spices, such as ginger, into meals is very beneficial.

Be mindful to also avoid cold drinks. Enjoy warm, herbal teas where possible to replenish lost fluids.

## **SET BOUNDARIES**

This is a time for rest, recovery and learning to communicate with your baby. Be clear in who you want in your space. You do not need to be entertaining friends and family until you feel ready.