



SUGGESTED COMPLEMENTARY REMEDIES

There are many safe natural and holistic/complementary remedies that you can use in pregnancy, labour and Postpartum. These are suggestions only, recommended by your midwives based on years of using and noting the benefits. Please note that not all remedies are listed, just the more common ones midwives use. You should not undertake any of the following that either you do not understand or are uncomfortable with taking. Please feel free to discuss these and any other natural remedies you may have heard about with your midwives.

HERBS – Herbs are products made from plants or botanicals such as seeds, berries, roots, leaves, bark, or flowers that are used for medicinal purposes to treat diseases or to maintain health. Herbal medicine comes in all forms and can be used in various ways. The practice of using herbal medicine dates back thousands of years. Today, the use of these herbal supplements has become mainstream worldwide.

HOMEOPATHY- Homeopathy, also known as homeopathic medicine, is based on two unconventional theories. “Like cures like” (disease can be cured by a substance that produces similar symptoms in healthy people) and “Law of minimum dose” (the lower the dose of the medication, the greater its effectiveness). Homeopathic products come from plants, minerals, or animals. Homeopathic products are often made as sugar pellets to be placed under the tongue.

ESSENTIAL OILS - Aromatherapy, or essential oils therapy, is using a plant's aroma-producing oils (essential oils) to treat disease. Essential oils are from a plant's flowers, leaves, stalks, bark, rind, or roots. The oils are mixed with another substance (such as oil, alcohol, or lotion) and then put on the skin, sprayed in the air, or inhaled. The oils are thought to interact with the body's hormones and enzymes to cause changes in blood pressure, pulse, and other body functions and may also stimulate the body to produce pain-fighting substances.

TO TAKE DURING PREGNANCY

Pregnancy Tea - Red raspberry leaf tea is the most popular tea that pregnant mothers drink to prepare their body for labour. Red raspberry leaves contain fragarine, a plant compound that helps tone and tighten muscles in the pelvic area, which may reduce the menstrual cramping caused by the spasms of these muscles. It acts on the uterus by strengthening and toning uterine muscle.

We recommended by 36 weeks, drinking 3-4 cups/ day (or more). Alternatively, you may take 2 red raspberry leaf capsules/ day, one in the morning and one in the evening. Our Red Raspberry leaf tea (“Tea for two”) is a combination of red raspberry leaves, nettles, dandelion leaf, red clover and lemon balm.

Homeopathic EZ- Birth – this looks like a blue/green Chapstick. EZ –Birth is a homeopathic remedy used to help the body for prepare for labour and encourage the baby to orient itself in the position that is most optimal for birth. It is a combination remedy that contains Caulophyllum, Cimicifuga, Arnica, Pulsatilla, and Gelsemium. In the 1987 study by *Dorfman et al*, the average duration of labour was decreased (5.1 vs. 8.5 hours), and the percentage of dystocia, or difficult birth, was reduced (11.3% vs. 40%).

By 37 weeks take 2-3 pellets 3x/day. With homeopathy, DO NOT touch the pellets. Tip them under your tongue from the cap and allow it to dissolve. Avoid eating or drinking 10 minutes before and after taking the pellets. Also avoid strong smells such as coffee or peppermint while the pellets are dissolving.

Evening Primrose Oil - Evening primrose oil is an essential fatty acid that has two effects through pregnancy. For some women the extreme mood swings and emotional ups and downs of pregnancy can be lessened by taking one 500mg capsule of evening primrose oil a day. In addition, towards the end of pregnancy, the oil, if placed near the cervix, acts to soften and ripen the cervix in preparation for labour.

At 37 weeks 1000mg can be taken orally daily, and an additional 1000mg insert as vaginal suppositories. You do not need to puncture them prior to insertion, as your body will dissolve them. You may also note the remnants of the capsule when you get up to go to the washroom or in the morning if your body hasn't absorbed them completely. Both are normal.

Homeopathic Pulsatilla - Pulsatilla is especially helpful when tissue tension is an issue, such as tight round and/or broad ligaments. Pulsatilla seems to soften the lower uterine segment and give the baby room to reposition. Pulsatilla is recommended to take if your baby is in a breech position after 34 weeks of pregnancy. It can help encourage baby to be in a head down position. Also, can be used for babies who are in a posterior position or facing outwards with their backs to your back. Just like all homeopathics, DO NOT touch the pellets.

LABOUR

Essential Oil Clary Sage – Clary Sage may be used aromatically or topically during labor to support the effectiveness of and encourage the regular contractions, increase mental clarity, and decrease the normal pain associated with labor once contractions are strong.

AFTER THE BIRTH - Postpartum

Calendula Tincture - The flower petals of the calendula plant (*Calendula officinalis*), or pot marigold have been used for medicinal purposes since at least the 12th century. Calendula has been shown to help wounds heal faster possibly by increasing blood flow and oxygen to the affected area, which helps the body grow new tissue.

Using a mixture of calendula with water after each void during the first week will help aid the healing of your tissues.

Use of frozen pads mixture not only ease pain, but also reduce swelling, bruising, and discomfort associated with hemorrhoids and vaginal stitches. Recipe below.

FROZEN PAD RECIPE

- Add a dropper full (or 2) of Calendula to your peri-care or spritz bottle.
- Fill your bottle with water to the top
- Line a cookie sheet with wax paper (so pads don't stick)
- Place 6- 12 THICK sanitary pads on the sheet (NOT Panty liners and DO NOT use "Always" brand)
- Apply calendula/ water mixture. Do not over soak them. Apply enough so that the pads freeze.
- Place the cookie sheet in the freezer. Once the pads are frozen, stack into freezer in a plastic bag and tell your partner where they are (they will be the one getting them after the birth- not you)

Homeopathic Arnica - Arnica is a well-documented homeopathic remedy that is excellent in the treatment of swollen, bruised and raw tissues. It will also help the tired and sore muscles throughout your body. Take a 2-3 pellets several times a day after the birth, allowing them to dissolve under your tongue, to promote healing. Keep it on hand for when your baby is a toddler, great for bumps and bruises, and safe for baby. Remember, DO NOT touch the pellets. Also, homeopathies work best when you do not consume fluids or foods for at least 15 min before and after.

Herbal sitz baths

A sitz bath is a warm, shallow bath that has many benefits for the perineal area and / or rectal area. (Although warm is more comfortable, some women prefer cool water in their sitz bath — especially since cool water tends to reduce swelling more effectively than warm water).

Sitz baths improves blood flow to the perineal and rectal area, which reduces swelling and inflammation and promotes healing. Ease pain and itching from hemorrhoids. Relaxes the muscles in the perineum, which can relieve the pain of a tear or episiotomy. Soothes the soreness that comes from childbirth stretching. Relieves the itching that often accompanies stitches and keep your perineal area clean, helping to lower the risk of infection.

While the use of just Epsom salt or Witch hazel is effective, Origins Midwifery's postpartum sitz baths combines the healing power of sea salt, comfrey, calendula petals, urva ursa, witch hazel, lavender flower and epsom salts in their sitz baths package.