

Supreme Parents

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Engaging & Empowering
The Digital Learner

Care After Birth
Which Caregiver
is Right?

Goodness of Ikan
Bilis Powder

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Colorful Day Out with Kids
Toddlers Bash in October

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Care After Birth

MAINTAINING A HEALTHY DIET

It is very important to maintain a healthy diet. Not only do mothers need the energy in the short term to look after their babies, a healthy diet will have long term health benefits for mothers and their families. Mothers may feel that they don't have the time to cook, so try quick, healthy meals. It's important to eat well after giving birth, particularly foods rich in iron. Iron is found in lean meat, leafy dark green vegetables, enriched or whole grains, and dried beans. Some mothers find that eating small balanced meals every four hours helps them fight fatigue. A breastfeeding mother will gradually lose weight if she chooses a well-balanced diet with nutrient-dense foods, even with the increased intake. Foods with strong flavors may alter the flavor of breast milk for the baby. It is very important to drink plenty of water, and caffeine and alcohol should be avoided. For those women not breast feeding, weight loss should occur at a slow, steady pace.

WHAT YOUR DIET SHOULD CONSIST:

Bread, other cereals and potatoes (including breakfast cereals, pasta and rice). These foods should make up the main part of your diet.

Fruit and vegetables (including fresh salad vegetables, beans and lentils, dried fruit and fruit juice).

Milk and dairy foods. Eat or drink moderate amounts and choose lower fat versions whenever possible.

Meat, fish and alternatives. Alternatives include eggs, beans and lentils, nuts and textured vegetable protein. Eat moderate amounts and choose lower fat versions whenever possible. Try to eat at least one portion of oily fish (e.g. sardines or salmon) a week.

Foods containing fat and sugar. Eat sparingly, i.e. infrequently and/or in small amounts.

Regaining their original weight may take some time and effort from the mother. Most of the weight is lost within a few days of childbirth, as the excess water during pregnancy is flushed out as urine. Thereafter weight loss slows down. If women continue to breastfeed their baby for more than six months, they will find their weight decreases naturally. The entire process of being pregnant and childbearing is an emotional time. So it will help if women have someone to talk to about how they feel their fears and apprehension etc.

Walking is safe to do right after childbirth and it helps prepare the mother's body for more strenuous exercise later on. Walking gently for 15 to 20 minutes each day in the fresh air. By the 8th week, women should be able to resume their exercise program (jogging, gym workout) or to start one if they haven't. The important thing is not to overdo it. Setting unrealistic goals will only result in disappointment and a loss of motivation. Start small and make a commitment to stick to it. More important, women must be patient and take a long-term view. The only natural way to regain back to one's old shape is through breastfeeding, regular exercise and by decreasing one's caloric intake once the baby is weaned off breastfeeding.

Common health concerns in women who have recently given birth

Symptoms	This could mean	What you can Do
Not being able to pass urine within 6 hours of birth	Urine retention	Take a warm bath or shower. You may need a catheter inserted into your urinary passage if this doesn't work.
Painful, stinging, unpleasant smelling, uncomfortable vagina and/or surrounding area (perineum)	Infection	Ask your doctor to check your perineum for signs of infection and problems with healing. Crushed ice or gel pads and paracetamol may be advised. If your perineum doesn't get better you may be offered medication to help reduce any inflammation.
Difficulty or inability to pass stools	Constipation	Taking a healthy diet and adequate fluids should prevent this. You may be offered a gentle laxative if changes in diet don't help.
Leaking urine when you don't mean to	Urinary incontinence	Strengthen your pelvic floor muscles with Kegel exercises. If these don't help, you may need to see a gynaecologist for further treatment.
Low mood, anxiety, restlessness, tearfulness, fatigue	Baby blues, postnatal depression	Take gentle exercise, take time to rest and get help caring for your baby. If you have experienced symptoms of the baby blues which have not improved after 10 days you should be assessed to see if you have postnatal depression.
Rectal pain or bleeding	Haemorrhoids	Increase the amount of fluid and fibre in your diet to avoid constipation.
Passing stools when you don't mean to	Faecal incontinence	See your doctor to get an assessment on how severe the problem. You may be referred for further checks if this doesn't get better.
Persistent tiredness	Anaemia (not enough iron in your blood)	Ensure you have a healthy diet and exercise regime, may be need iron supplements.
Backache	Musculoskeletal problem	Ask your doctor to check your back for the potential problem.



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