

mother and baby & homoeopathy

The following suggestions may help women cope with the common symptoms and difficulties experienced during pregnancy, birth and the postpartum period. It is not suggested that Homoeopathy take the place of medical care, rather that it allows you to deal with problems that may otherwise go untreated and cause distress and discomfort. Please contact your Homoeopath, midwife or medical professional if you need advice or are unable to resolve a problem.

The information and remedy pictures that follow are available in traditional homoeopathic texts. If a homoeopathic remedy picture matches your individual symptom picture the remedy may offer symptomatic relief. Homoeopathic principles should be applied when using any homoeopathic remedy. Always read the product label. If symptoms persist consult your health care practitioner promptly.

Pregnancy

Anticipatory Anxiety: Medical tests if needed often cause anxiety or trauma. Take a friend or partner with you for support and ask them to write any information down for you. For anxiety **Argent Nit**, **Gelsemium** or **Aconite**. **Arnica** and **Rescue Remedy** may be helpful after traumatic procedures. **Aconite** if you feel shocked.

Diet & Nutrition: Your requirements for folic acid, vitamins B and C, calcium, zinc and magnesium can rise by 30-100% during pregnancy. Consult a nutritionist or naturopath if you need help assessing the quality of your dietary intake. Hormonal changes can affect the gum tissue and attention to dental health and hygiene is important. Bleeding gums - **Mercurius** or **Phosphorus**. Preferably have a dental check-up before conceiving.

Exercise & Relaxation: Exercise increases stamina, strength and flexibility. Maintaining a gentle, regular exercise program, incorporating exercises to strengthen the back and pelvic floor facilitates the birth process and recovery. It is equally important to make time for relaxation, massage, meditation and rest.

Haemorrhoids & Constipation: Careful attention to and adjustment of the diet is essential along with tis-

sue salt **Combination G** can improve elasticity and tone. For haemorrhoids **Pulsatilla**, **Sulphur**, **Kali carb** or **Lachesis** may be useful. **Witchhazel** applied to a napkin and held in place as a compress may ease the pain. Constipation is uncomfortable and undesirable and may respond to **Nux Vomica**, **Alumina** or **Sepia**. Iron supplements can exacerbate the problem, so consider alternatives.

Heartburn: Hormonal changes can relax the sphincter of the stomach and aggravate this problem. Heartburn after only a little food, worse cold food and drink and between 4-8p.m - **Lycopodium**. Also consider **Nux Vomica**, **Nat phos** or **Pulsatilla**. Try drinking **Fennel Tea** and using **Ginger** in cooking. Antacids may affect iron absorption.

Morning Sickness: For best results start treatment as soon as possible rather than letting it become chronic. Repeat **Nat sulph 6x** frequently or as needed. Copious vomiting with persistent nausea - **Ipecac**. Thirstless, excessive mucous - **Pulsatilla**. Heartburn, belching and heavy bloated feeling - **Nux vomica**. **Colchicum**, **Ars Alb** or **Sepia** if you cannot bear the sight or smell of food.

Skin Problems: Hormonal changes often affect the skin. Broken veins - **Arnica**, Pigmentation - short courses of **Sepia**, Spots - **Sepia**, **Nat Mur** or **Pulsatilla**. Itchiness - **Sulphur**.

Sleeplessness: Sleepless with fear and excitement. Anxious, restless and worried - **Aconite**. Crowding of thoughts and ideas. Or sleepless from joy - **Coffea**. From mental strain or over-indulgence in food, coffee etc. - **Nux Vomica**. After the birth this can be the result of a "hormonal high", try **Coffea** or **Kali Phos**. Use **Nux Vomica** if there is irritability as well.

Stretch Marks: Some women have more elastic skin that stretches easily. If you are not so lucky take Vitamin E and tissue salts and use an essential oil blend with Frankincense, Lavender and Neroli in Wheatgerm to keep the skin supple. Prepare the vagina with a daily perennal massage using almond oil.

Tissue Salts: According to homoeopath John Damonte this program can support and strengthen the pregnant woman and her growing baby.

John suggests one dose of each salt per day to help promote the body's own metabolism.

2nd & 6th Month - **Calc Fluor, Mag Phos, Ferr Phos**

3rd & 7th Month - **Calc Fluor, Mag Phos, Nat Mur**

4th & 8th Month - **Calc Fluor, Nat Mur, Silica**

5th & 9th Month - **Calc Fluor, Ferr Phos, Silica**

[from **The New Active Birth** by Janet Balaskas]

Thrush: The acid/alkaline balance of the vagina may change during pregnancy resulting in thrush. Live yoghurt and a drop of tea tree oil applied locally can help. Reduce sugars and yeasty foods. Consider **Sepia, Pulsatilla** or **Nat phos**.

Loss of a Baby: The loss of a baby is devastating whether it is before birth, at birth or in infancy. Homoeopaths may help through this process but will not take the place of the support, counselling and care that the grieving process deserves. Consider **Ignatia**, the great grief remedy, for loss and disappointment, especially with sighing. Also **Nat Mur, Pulsatilla** and **Phos Acid**.

Birthing

The following instructions should be studied carefully, well before they are needed so that you are familiar with the indications for each remedy and it only takes a quick review to choose the correct remedy. If it fails to act you need to reconsider your symptoms.

Remedies to Use Throughout: **Arnica** regularly during labour may help with bruising, trauma and shock. **Mag phos** with its antispasmodic action may help with pain. It can be put in water with **Rescue Remedy** and sipped. **Rescue Remedy** is an excellent calming tonic and restorative that can also be given to anyone attending the birth for emotional exhaustion.

Anxiety & Emotional Upset: Anxiety with diarrhoea and general shakiness; trembling of hands, legs etc - **Gelsemium**. Gushing of bright red blood with great anxiety and fear of death. Sudden sinking of strength or for intolerable pain with anxiety - **Aconite**. Emotional, clingy, weepy, unpredictable, needs consolation and a cuddle - **Pulsatilla**. **Pulsatilla** may need repeating at any stage during labour, if this pattern emerges. Indifferent, irritable and adverse to consolation - **Sepia**.

Back Pain: **Kali Carb** for weakness and pain in the small of the back. **Sepia** can be used where the pain is better for hard pressure in the small of the back. When labour pains extend to the back, passing up the spine or to the hips try **Gelsemium**.

Ineffectual Contractions: Use **Caulophyllum** for contractions which are ineffectual or if labour is intermittent. One or two doses usually enhance contractions or reinstates labour if it has ceased. It may

be necessary to take a few doses, but don't repeat too frequently as the contractions could follow one on top of each other with no recuperation period. **Gelsemium** or **Cimicifuga** may be useful for rigidity of cervix if **Caulophyllum** fails.

Irritability & Pain Intolerance: **Chamomilla** is most often used in the second stage. Indications are of great irritability, uncharacteristic to the patient and caused by the intensity of the pain. Typically the **Chamomilla** patient becomes very irritable and fractious, orders people out of the room, even has a temper tantrum. It may be used for any condition where this irritability is present. **Aconite** for intolerable pain with prominent anxiety.

Immediate Post Delivery: The shaking associated with sudden hormone changes may be settled with a dose or two of **Gelsemium**. **Caulophyllum** usually encourages the placenta to deliver or consider **Sepia**.

Caesarian Section: **Arnica**, started before surgery and continuing immediately after the birth for a week or so may help heal bruising, **Hypericum** may help stimulate repair of any nerve damage and **Staphysagria** for healing the incision. These remedies can be repeated regularly after the Caesarian and then as needed until healed.

Episiotomy & Tears see **Birth Trauma**

Post Natal Care

Sometimes when we have awaited an event with such joy and anticipation it can be quite a shock and disappointment to contend with painful breasts and bottom, exhaustion, emotional ups and downs and a less than settled baby. Homoeopathy can help to keep the sun shining on you and your babe.

After Pains: **Arnica** usually minimises discomfort, take regularly after labour. Consider **Aconite** if there is characteristic anxiety and **Mag Phos** for spasmodic cramping pain. Seek help if these are not adequate, especially if drugs were used.

Back Pain also see **Birthing:** The tissue salt **Combination G** taken regularly helps as do **Sepia** and **Kali Carb**. A blend of **Rosemary, Hyperica, Lavender** and **Arnica** oils in the bath or as a massage is soothing.

Birth Trauma: **Arnica** as needed for a week or more may help disperse bruising following a difficult or traumatic delivery. It may be needed more frequently initially. If deep pain remains despite the use of **Arnica** consider **Bellis Perennis**. Add **Hyperica** or **Calendula** to help heal a tear or **Staphysagria** after episiotomy

or caesarean section plus extra **Vitamin E, Silica 6x** and **Calc Fluor 6x** to help promote healing.

Breastfeeding section to follow

Diet: Nutritional requirements are at a peak when recovering from childbirth, breast feeding and coping with broken and often inadequate sleep. The quality of the food you eat reflects in yours and baby's general emotional and physical health. Avoid sugars, additives, refined foods and stimulants and drink plenty of fluids. Foods such as dairy, wheat and sugars may upset your baby's system.

Exhaustion: Make sure that you are your number one priority or you won't have the energy required. Restrict visitors, get practical help with chores and emotional support from your partner or a friend. Take **B Vitamins**, extra **Vitamin C** and **Tissue Salt Combination B**. Consider **Cocculus, Nitric Acid** or **Nux Vomica** for lack of sleep and nervous exhaustion. Weakness from loss of vital fluids, during delivery or from breastfeeding – **China**. Weakness, loss of weight and low energy – **Silica**. Burn oils such as **Lavender, Geranium, Neroli** and **Orange** or add them to the bath or a massage blend.

Haemorrhoids see **Pregnancy**

Hair Loss: Eat well and regularly, include lots of mineral rich foods. Try **Nat Mur** or **Sepia** and the tissue salt **Combination K** plus **Calc Phos** (defective nutrition) or **Kali Phos** (nervous causes).

Insomnia see **Pregnancy**

Low Libido: This is common and you often just need time and patience. Resolving problems such as painful episiotomy, backache, a colicky baby and exhaustion usually improves libido. The main remedies to consider are **Causticum, Nat Mur** and **Sepia**.

Postnatal Blues: A feeling of weepiness or despair is common in the early days however expert care is necessary for depression or feelings of anxiety, hopelessness, mood swings or gloom which are not self limiting. Weepy, better from fresh air – **Pulsatilla**. Despair, guilt, disappointment and/or grief especially when things do not follow our ideals – **Ignatia**. If you cannot cry or cry on your own - **Nat Mur**. Irritable and a desire to run away – **Sepia**. Irritable and anxious – **Nux Vomica**.

Prolapse: Damaged or weakened ligaments and muscles may be helped with **Calc Fluor, Pulsatilla, Ruta grav** or **Sepia**.

Loss of a Baby see **Pregnancy**

Urinary Difficulties: Retention of urine after the birth

is often caused by bruising and trauma. **Aconite** (with anxiety and panic) or **Causticum** will usually set things right. Otherwise **Pulsatilla, Staphysagria** or **Arnica**.

Incontinence can be a result of bruising and weakened pelvic floor muscles. Avoid constipation, exercise the pelvic floor muscles and urinate regularly. Don't cut down on fluids or allow your bladder to be over full. Consider **Arsenicum, Sepia, Nat Mur** or **Causticum**.

Babies

Homoeopathy is an energetic method of treatment for your baby. Many problems such as colic, teething, fevers, sleeplessness, digestive upsets and reflux may be helped simply and effectively with home prescribing. Recurrent and stubborn problems require professional advice.

Birth Trauma: **Arnica** and **Rescue Remedy** are usually indicated following a difficult or traumatic delivery. If problems do not resolve quickly consult your Homoeopath.

Colic: There are two groups. Those who draw their knees up: Sharp, cutting pains, writhes and twists – **Colocynthis**. Severe unbearable pain and abdominal swelling with typical irritability – **Chamomilla**. Sharp, cramping pains. Tired and exhausted – **Mag Phos**.

Those who arch backwards: Pains radiate from abdomen, worse from pressure – **Dioscorea**. Colic with foul diarrhoea and nausea – **Ipecac**. Severe bloating and pressure – **Nux Vomica**. Distended hot abdomen. Hot and restless – **Belladonna**. If the mother is suffering from grief or disappointment **Ignatia** may help the baby's colic. Drugs given at or after the birth can sometimes cause colicky pain in babies.

Croup: First stage use **Aconite 6c** (repeat as needed 1st hour). If necessary follow with **Spongia 6c** (2nd hour) and **Hepar Sulph 6c** (3rd hour). Continue to alternate **Spongia** and **Hepar** as necessary.

Refusing Milk or Vomiting: Poor quality milk - **Calc Carb**. Downward movements during nursing cause baby to scream - **Borax**. Baby is thin with a large sweaty head, vomits after feeds - **Silica**. Reflux with or without vomiting consider **Aethusa, Nux vomica** or **Phosphorus**. Sometimes this can be caused by medication and may benefit from a consult with your homoeopath to resolve.

Teething: Unbearable pain. Fretful, angry and inconsolable. Wants to be carried. One cheek red and one pale. Diarrhoea - **Chamomilla**. Convulsions. Hot, flushed, restless and delirious - **Belladonna**. Excessive sweat and saliva, red gums - **Mercurius**. Biting - **Phytolacca**.

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Breastfeeding

Although breastfeeding is a wonderful experience when everything is going 'right', if it is difficult to establish feeding, then disappointment and despair can result. Causes can include incomplete recovery from a traumatic delivery, emotional issues or physical problems such as cracked nipples and colic.

Blocked Duct: Massage breasts gently, apply hot and cold compresses, increase fluids, ensure adequate rest and allow time at feeds for the breasts to be drained completely. Seek help if the indicated remedies don't act quickly. For threatened mastitis where there is heat, fever, congestion and possibly throbbing use **Belladonna** frequently. Much worse from movement and heat. Breast is hard and hot, usually right sided - **Bryonia**. Left sided and worse while feeding - **Silica**. Breast hard, nodular, lumpy and painful - **Phytolacca**. Also consider **Hepar Sulph** or **Mercurius**.

Engorgement: When the milk "comes in" the breasts may become red, hard, painful and throb with the flow too copious. Red streaks may radiate out from the nipple - **Belladonna**. Breasts are full and look pale, any movement is painful - **Bryonia**. Supply copious but changeable in timid weepy women - **Pulsatilla**. Extreme sensitivity to cold, cold sweats and tendency to be overweight. Breasts large and uncomfortable,

supply copious but poor in quality - **Calc Carb**. Inflamed and lumpy with pain while nursing - **Phytolacca**.

Low Milk Supply: Supply low or milk watery and thin in mild, weepy women - **Pulsatilla**. Breast may be full and sore but not producing much milk in anxious, sluggish women - **Calc Carb**. When supply is low or overabundant, with no obvious cause and little desire to express and store - **Urtica Urens**.

Sore & Cracked Nipples: Beware of creams, soaps and detergents that may be creating an allergy. Apply **Calendula** or **Rescue Remedy** cream topically and expose nipples to the sun or warm air. Nipples sore, cracked and very tender, quickly becoming raw and itchy if left untreated - **Castor Equi**. Inflamed, extremely tender and sensitive - **Chamomilla**. Cracks deep and sore and may be across the crown - **Sepia**. Inverted nipples which are cracked, sore and bleeding - **Silica**. Chapped and with smarting, burning pain - **Sulphur**. Nipples cracked & sore with radiating pain, breasts lumpy - **Phytolacca**. Thrush - **Borax**.

Weaning: Weaning your baby is best done gradually, however this is not always possible. **Lac Caninum** and **Pulsatilla** may be useful to help reduce the milk supply when weaning. Babies often become upset when feeding stops, usually **Ignatia** or **Pulsatilla** help.