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# *Postpartum Recovery & Chinese Medicine*

Qi  
MEDICINE

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# *Qi Medicine*

At Qi Medicine Acupuncture we recognise the huge changes that occur for a woman and her family after the birth of a child. That's why we have some very special ways to support you in the weeks immediately following birth, known as the 'golden month'.

If you have not already done so, please take advantage of our complimentary after-baby telehealth appointment with one of our doctors to discuss your recovery. (You don't even need to get out of pajamas for this one!)



Book your complimentary  
Tele-health by getting in touch  
with us:



(03) 8394 7665



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# *Common Postpartum Challenges*

After giving birth, the body undergoes significant hormonal, emotional, and physical changes.

Common postpartum concerns include:

- Difficulty breastfeeding
- Blood loss and nutrient deficiencies
- Stress, anxiety and 'fight or flight'
- Hair loss
- Thyroid imbalance
- Ongoing bleeding or pain (C-section, tearing)
- Pelvic organ prolapse
- Depression, mood swings, sleep disturbances

Chinese Medicine and acupuncture may help relieve pain, ease stress, and support a more balanced recovery.



# *How Chinese Medicine Views Postpartum Recovery*

In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), the six weeks after birth are considered sacred. This period, known as "Chan Ru", emphasises warmth, rest, and nourishment to rebuild Qi (vital energy) and blood. The practice of "Zuo Yuezi" or "sitting the month," encourages the mother to rest at home, focus on healing, and avoid physical strain. Though full seclusion may not be possible today, the principles remain important.

Traditional Chinese Medicine supports postpartum recovery through:

- Dietary therapy
- Acupuncture
- Herbal medicine
- Moxibustion (Mother Warming)



# *Mother Warming Therapy*

Mother Warming is a postnatal moxibustion treatment using mugwort to warm specific points on the abdomen and lower back. This gentle heat helps replenish Qi and blood, dispel cold, and promote healing. It is typically applied within the first 1–2 weeks postpartum and may be combined with gentle acupuncture.

## *Chinese Herbal Medicine for Postpartum*

Herbal formulas in Traditional Chinese Medicine are tailored to each individual and may:

- Nourish Qi and blood
- Calm the nervous system
- Support overall healing and vitality

When prescribed by a qualified practitioner, Chinese herbs gently restore balance and energy.

# *Nourishment Through Food*

In Traditional Chinese Medicine, food is medicine. Warm, cooked meals support digestion and recovery. Soups, broths, root vegetables, and congee (rice porridge) are highly recommended. These foods help nourish Qi and blood while being easy on the digestive system.

## *Postnatal Congee (porridge)*

Rice congee with mushrooms, red dates, goji berries, ginger, and sesame seeds. This will help to boost energy, improve hormones and settle stress and anxiety.



# *Nourishing Pumpkin Soup*

Pumpkin is grounding and supports digestion. This warming soup helps stabilise blood sugar and moisturises the body.

## **Ingredients:**

- 1 pumpkin (e.g., butternut or Kent)
- 2 onions (optional)
- 2 garlic cloves
- 2 cups water
- 2 cups vegetable or chicken stock
- 1 tsp fresh or powdered ginger
- Oil or butter
- 1/2 cup coconut or heavy cream
- Salt and pepper

## **Instructions:**

1. Saute onion and garlic in oil.
2. Add pumpkin chunks, saute briefly.
3. Add water, cover and simmer until soft.
4. Add stock, ginger, and simmer further.
5. Stir in cream, cool, then blend.
6. Reheat and serve with bread or croutons.



# *Chicken and Mushroom Congee with Spring Onions*

Congee is a healing, hydrating dish ideal for postpartum recovery. This recipe will give you the energy you need to look after yourself and bubs at the same time.

## **Ingredients:**

- 1.5 cups short/medium grain rice
- 1-2 inches ginger
- 10 cups water
- 5-8 dried shiitake mushrooms
- 450g chicken (breast/thighs)
- Salt, soy sauce
- Sesame oil, cooking wine
- Spring onions

## **Instructions:**

1. Wash rice and add to pot with sliced ginger and water.
2. Soak mushrooms until soft, then slice.
3. Marinate chicken with ginger, soy, wine, and sugar.
4. After 30 minutes, add mushrooms to congee.
5. Add chicken, simmer until cooked.
6. Serve with spring onions and sesame oil.



# *Goji Berry Tea*

Goji berries nourish Yin, fluids, and blood. They're rich in antioxidants and vitamins A, C, and E.

## **Ingredients:**

- 4 – 6 goji berries
- Boiling water
- Lemon (optional)

## **Instructions:**

1. Steep berries in boiled (cooled slightly) water for 5 mins.
2. Add lemon if desired.
3. Drink slowly. You may eat the berries after.





# *Foot Baths for Relaxation*

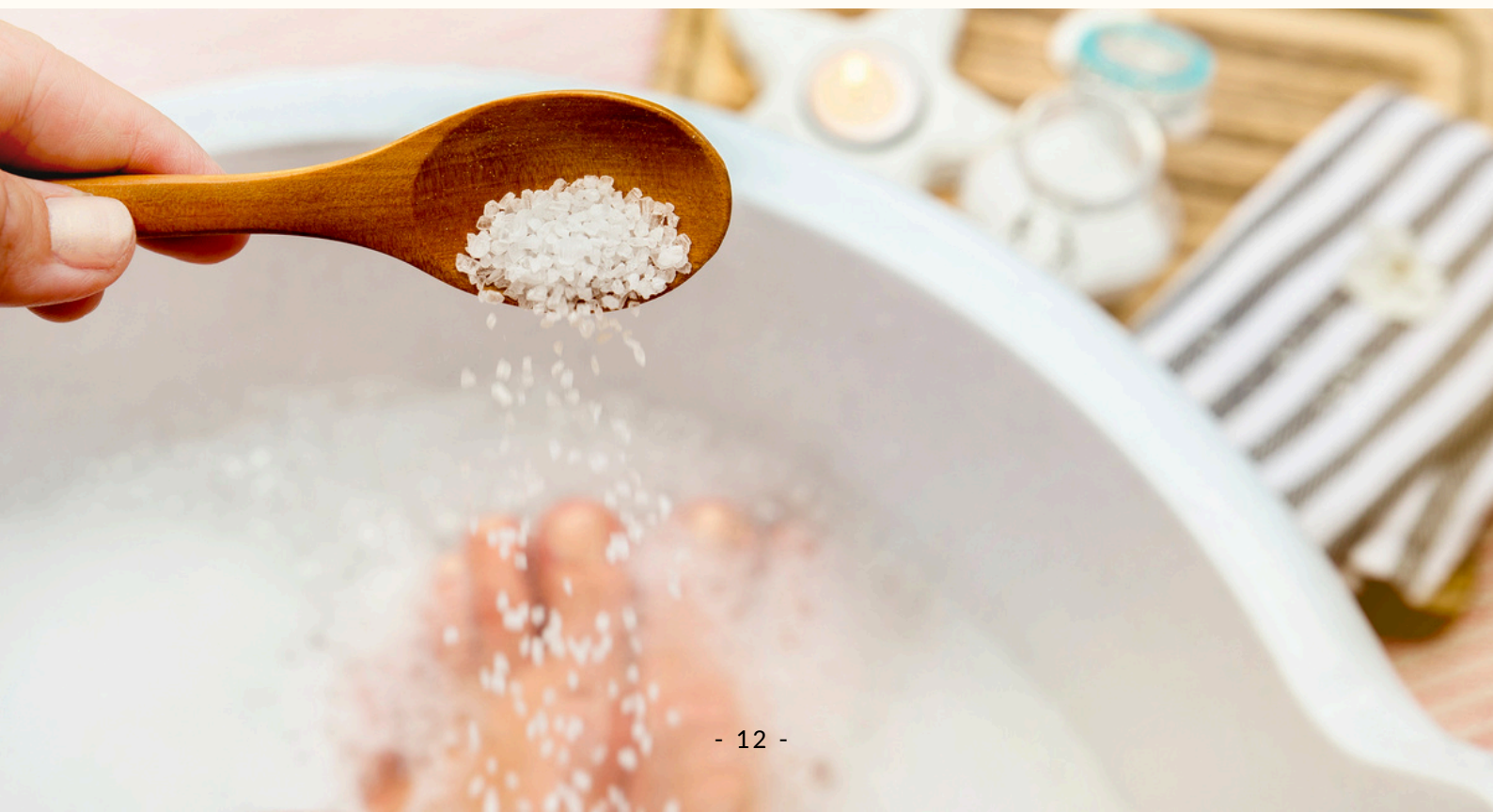
Foot baths have been used for centuries in Traditional Chinese Medicine to support circulation, calm the nervous system, and improve sleep. They stimulate acupuncture channels through the feet.

## **Prepare:**

- Basin or bathtub
- Epsom salts or essential oils
- Ginger slices or fruit peels
- 3 – 4L boiling water + 1L cool water

## **Instructions:**

1. Fill basin with hot water and additions.
2. Let steep, then check temperature.
3. Soak feet for 15–20 minutes.
4. Dry and keep feet warm with socks.







Chinese Medicine offers a nurturing, holistic approach to postpartum care. By incorporating warmth, nourishment, rest, and gentle therapies, mothers can regain strength and energy to care for themselves and their new baby.

Always consult with a qualified Traditional Chinese Medicine practitioner before beginning herbal or acupuncture treatments.

## *Next Steps*

Contact the team directly in for an acupuncture or herbal medicine consult by calling (03) 8394 7665 or emailing [info@qimedicine.com.au](mailto:info@qimedicine.com.au).

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# *Postpartum Recovery Exercises*

**BODY PLACE**

BY ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

# *Body Place*

Body Place is a family-run Allied Health clinic that's been operating in Moonee Ponds for 11 years. Recognising the need for more comprehensive and holistic support, Body Place has expanded their services to include Exercise Physiology, Nutrition, Clinical Pilates and Personal Training. Body Place offers a seamless, under-one-roof approach to health, where tertiary-qualified allied health professionals work collaboratively to support clients through all stages of life, injury and wellness goals.




Their services range from one-on-one and small group Exercise Physiology & Personal Training sessions to individualised Nutrition support and Clinical Pilates that are designed to make everybody feel supported, understood, educated and empowered in their health journey

# *Gentle Postnatal Recovery Exercises*

## **FOR VAGINAL & C-SECTION BIRTHS**

By: Shannon Kirkpatrick, Body Place Exercise Physiologist

Meet Shannon  [https://youtube.com/shorts/l6udVsbAr6w?  
feature=shared](https://youtube.com/shorts/l6udVsbAr6w?feature=shared)

## **INTRODUCTION**

This series of four simple gentle exercises is designed to support early post-natal recovery by reconnecting your breath, core and posture. These movements focus on healing from inside to out. This guide outlines when it is safe to begin these exercises from both a vaginal birth and C-section perspective.



## WHEN TO START: VAGINAL BIRTH VS. C-SECTION

EXERCISE	VAGINAL BIRTH	C-SECTION (WITH MEDICAL CLEARANCE)
Diaphragmatic Breathing	Day 1-2 post-birth	Day 1-2 post-birth (if comfortable)
Pelvic Floor Contraction	Day 1-2 post-birth	Week 2-3 post birth
Posterior Pelvic Tilt/Bridge	Week 1-2	Week 4-6+ post birth (or once cleared by doctor)
Thoracic Towel Stretch	Week 1	Week 2+ (as long as comfortable lying flat)

\*Always consult your healthcare provider before beginning exercise after childbirth, especially after a C-section or if you had complications.

## RED FLAGS

Stop and Seek Medical Advice If You Notice:

- Sharp, persistent, or worsening abdominal pain
- Bleeding that increases or restarts after easing
- A heavy or dragging sensation in the pelvic area
- Bulging or doming of the abdomen, especially during abdominal exercises
- Dizziness, nausea or chest tightness



# *The Exercises*

# *Diaphragmatic Breathing* **01** *(Deep Belly Breathing)*

Week 1-2 post-birth (both vaginal and C-section, if comfortable laying on back and pending medical clearance)



[Watch the Video on how to do Diaphragmatic Breathing here](#)

## **How to do it:**

- Lie on your back with one hand on your chest and one on your belly.
- Breathe in slowly through your nose, letting your belly rise as the air fills your lungs.
- Exhale gently through your mouth, allowing your belly to fall.
- Focus on keeping your chest still while your belly moves with each breath.
- Repeat for 5-10 slow, relaxed breaths.

## **Why does this help?**

Breathing efficiently with the diaphragm allows deep core muscles to contract and stabilise your abdominals. It also aids in reducing stress by calming your central nervous system.

# *Pelvic Floor Contraction* 02

- Vaginal birth: Week 1-2 post-birth
- C-Section: Week 2-3 (if no pain or discomfort and pending medical clearance)



[Watch the Video on how to do Pelvic Floor Contraction here](#)

## **How to do it:**

- Lie down comfortably on your back.
- Take a breath in, and as you exhale, gently squeeze the muscles you'd use to stop the flow of urine or hold in gas.
- Hold for 3-5 seconds, then fully release (this is just as important!) and rest.
- You want to remain breathing normally while you hold this contraction.
- Repeat 8-10 times.

## **Why does this help?**

Practicing pelvic floor contractions helps to strengthen the pelvic floor muscles, which can help with bladder control, core stability and overall pelvic health.



# *Thoracic Towel Stretch*

# *03*

- Vaginal Birth: Week 2-3 post-birth
- C-section: Week 2-3 (only if laying on back is comfortable and pending medical clearance)



[Watch the Video on how to do Thoracic Towel Stretch here](#)

## **How to do it:**


- Roll up a towel and place it vertically along the floor.
- Lie down on it so the towel runs along your spine and supports your head.
- Let your arms open out to the sides, palms facing up.
- Breathe deeply in and out and relax into the stretch for 1-2 minutes.

## **Why does this help?**

This thoracic towel stretch helps to open the chest and upper back, this is extremely important to counteract the hunched posture from feeding, holding and changing your baby.

# *Posterior Pelvic Tilt* *(Stage 1) / Bridge (Stage 2)*

- Vaginal birth: Week 2-3 post-birth
- C-Section: Week 6+ (if no pain or discomfort and pending medical clearance)

 [Watch the Video on how to do Pelvic Tilt and Bridge here](#)

Start with stage one (pelvic tilts) and once that is comfortable can progress to stage two (bridging).

## **How to do it:**

### STAGE 1: PELVIC TILTS

- Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor, hip-width apart.
- Gently tilt your pelvis so your lower back flattens into the floor as if you're trying to squash a grape under your lower back (posterior pelvic tilt).
- Then gently tilt your pelvis away from you (anterior pelvic tilt) to create a small space underneath your lower back.

## **Why does this help?**

Practicing pelvic tilts and lifts helps to mobilise the lumbar (lower) spine which can become very still during and post pregnancy. They also help to improve the strength of your lower back, glutes and core.

# *Posterior Pelvic Tilt* *(Stage 1) / Bridge (Stage 2)*

## **How to do it:**

### STAGE 2: BRIDGES

- Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor, hip-width apart.
- Gently tilt your pelvis so your lower back flattens into the floor as if you're trying to squash your lower back to the floor (posterior pelvic tilt).
- Then gently tilt your pelvis away from you (anterior pelvic tilt) to create a small space underneath your lower back.
- From here, press into your heels and slowly lift your hips into a bridge.
- Only raise up as high as is comfortable, it's not about how high you can go.
- Squeeze your bottom muscles (glutes) at the top, then slowly lower back down.
- Repeat 8–10 times.

## **Why does this help?**

Practicing pelvic tilts and lifts helps to mobilise the lumbar (lower) spine which can become very still during and post pregnancy. They also help to improve the strength of your lower back, glutes and core.



# *Top 5 Nutrients for Postpartum Recovery*

By: Danielle Marcato, Body Place Nutritionist and Exercise Scientist

## **INTRODUCTION**

After giving birth, your body is working hard to heal, replenish and produce milk, making this a time of both recovery and renewal. Childbirth and breastfeeding are physically demanding and your need for key nutrients increases. Nourishing yourself with the right foods supports tissue repair, restores energy, balances mood and helps you feel your strongest as you adjust to life as a new mum.

# Iron

# 01

## Why is it important for you?

Iron is essential for replenishing blood loss during delivery, preventing anemia, supporting energy and focus.

## Why is it important for your baby?

Iron is important for brain development, helping babies make healthy red blood cells, which carry oxygen around their bodies.

## Food sources:

Spinach, lentils, beans, tofu, quinoa, fortified foods, pumpkin seeds, red meat.

## Tip:

Pair with Vitamin C-rich foods (like oranges, strawberries, capsicum or broccoli) to increase absorption.





# *Omega-3 Fatty Acids (DHA)*

# 02

## **Why is it important for you?**

Omega-3 Fatty Acids support brain health, improve hormone balance by reducing inflammation and assist with mood regulation.

## **Why is it important for your baby?**

DHA (a type of omega-3) is essential for brain and eye development, passing through your milk to support your baby's brain.

## **Food sources:**

Fatty fish (salmon, sardines, mackerel), chia seeds, flaxseeds, hemp seeds, walnuts, algae oil.

## **Tip:**

Aim to eat fatty fish 2-3 times a week.





## 03

Protein supports milk production and assists with tissue repair, muscle strength, hormone production, immunity and energy levels.

Protein in breast milk supports your baby's development by providing them with essential building blocks for their muscles, tissues and organs.

Poultry and lean meats, tofu, dairy (greek yoghurt, cottage cheese), legumes, nuts and seeds.

Include a source of protein in every meal and snack to support recovery and keep energy levels steady.





*Calcium* *O4*

## Why is it important for you?

Calcium helps maintain bone strength and breast milk production, as when breastfeeding, your calcium stores are drawn from your bones. Calcium also prevents blood clots.

## Why is it important for your baby?

Calcium is a key building block for bones and teeth, while playing a crucial role in nerve and heart functioning.

### Food sources:

Dairy products (milk, cheese, yoghurt), fortified plant milk, broccoli, kale, bok choy and tofu.

**Tip:**

Pair with Vitamin D- rich foods (like mushrooms, egg yolks and fatty fish) to increase absorption.





# *Fibre*

*05*

## Why is it important for you?

Fibre aids digestion by assisting in the absorption of nutrients, regulating blood sugar levels and preventing postpartum constipation.

## Why is it important for your baby?

Fibre can influence the composition of your breast milk and helps support healthy digestion and prevent constipation in your baby.

### Food sources:

Wholegrains (oats, brown rice, quinoa), fruit (apples with skin, pears, raspberries), vegetables (carrots, leafy greens, sweet potato), nuts and seeds.

**Tip:**

Increase fibre gradually in the diet to prevent discomfort, while drinking plenty of water to prevent digestive discomfort.





# *Postpartum Superfood Spotlight: Bone Broth*

## **Why is it important for you?**

Bone broth is rich in collagen, gelatin and key amino acids that support tissue repair, gut health and joint recovery. It also provides easily absorbed minerals like calcium and magnesium to replenish your stores and support healing.

## **Why is it important for your baby?**

Nutrients in bone broth can support breast milk quality, helping your baby's bone and nervous system development.

## **Food sources:**

Slow-simmered bone broth made from chicken, beef or fish bones. One of our favourite recipes can be found [here](#). Organic store-bought bone broth is also a convenient option.

## **Tip:**

Sip between meals or use as a base for soups and stews to boost nourishment.



# *Next Steps*

Contact the team directly for a consult by calling



(03) 9370 8359

or emailing



[hello@bodyplace.au](mailto:hello@bodyplace.au) - EP, nutrition and general enquiries



[pt@bodyplace.au](mailto:pt@bodyplace.au) - PT enquiries



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