

**The Fourth Trimester**

Outer Womb – Courtney Meltvedt, DC

Pathways #45, page 34



**Talking Points**

- ❖ Preparing for a new baby can be fun and exciting but we can't forget about mom! "A healthy postpartum recovery is essential to help establish breastfeeding, help the family adjust to the newest addition (whether it's the first child or beyond), and to promote the mother's emotional and physical health." (34)
- ❖ Food! Preparing food with a new baby can be difficult and you'll need the nourishment (and baby too). Think about precooking meals for yourself during pregnancy and freezing them for when the baby is here or asking people to help set up a meal train.
- ❖ Rest! Your body needs rest. Pay attention to your body and bleeding to make sure you aren't over exerting yourself.
- ❖ Co-sleeping is a great way to help you get more sleep while attending to your new baby. Co-sleeping simply means sleeping in the same room as your baby. You can co-sleep whichever way you feel most comfortable.
- ❖ Sleep will help to keep the peace in the home and allow everyone to function.
- ❖ Chiropractic is still just as important in your postpartum days as it was during pregnancy. Your body is trying to adjust to the absence of you baby and is realigning your spine and pelvis. You are still harboring hormones from pregnancy and your body is still "soft" from the extra relaxin.
- ❖ Acupuncture also helps to support your body coming back into balance during your postpartum transformation.
- ❖ Pregnancy is when you are in your fullest Yin state. Labor is a state of Yang. "Acupuncture supports a successful balance of energy so that the body can utilize it as best as possible and function optimally" (36)
- ❖ Chiropractic and acupuncture complement each other well. Chiropractic focuses on the structural changes and acupuncture taps into the internal.
- ❖ "As a result of receiving these types of care, many of the common abnormal postpartum signs and symptoms, such as persistent postpartum bleeding, low milk supply, painful hemorrhoids,

- depression, or pain and weakness, simply disappear.” (36)
- ❖ The placenta has been producing your hormones for the majority of your pregnancy. Many women are ingesting their placentas by encapsulating them as a way to help balance their hormones during the 4<sup>th</sup> trimester.
  - ❖ The placenta is composed of prolactin, oxytocin, prostaglandins, estrogen, hemoglobin as well as other components.
  - ❖ It has been said that consuming your placenta can help stem postpartum bleeding because of the high oxytocin and prostaglandin.
  - ❖ Belly binding helps to provide support for the process of involution. Involution is “involution—the shrinking of the uterus to its approximate pre-pregnancy size, and to support abdominal muscles, ligaments and organs as they return to their previous sizes and positions.” (37)
  - ❖ Wrapping your belly can also aid in *diastasis recti* by providing abdominal support while your muscles strengthen.
  - ❖ Breastfeeding not only has benefits for baby but for you too. It contacts your uterus to help it shrink down to pre-pregnancy size while releasing oxytocin, the love hormone, which lifts your mood and helps strengthen the bond with your new baby.
  - ❖ The composition of your breast milk changes throughout the day. During the night hours your milk has higher levels of tryptophan. Tryptophan is “an amino acid that converts to serotonin which makes baby feel happy, which then converts to melatonin—the hormone that induces sleep.” (38)
  - ❖ Prolactin levels in the mother are also highest while sleeping, promoting a hearty breast milk supply.
  - ❖ Never be afraid to ask for help when it comes to breastfeeding. There is a lot of help available. Find a lactation consultant, lactation counselor and/or your nearest La Leche League for help and support.
  - ❖ Be patient and be gentle with yourself, you just gave birth.

## Resources

Full references for each article are available at <http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html>

“What a Family Needs” by Gloria Lemay - Help your friends and family help you with this list of support and necessities that are hard to manage once baby arrives <http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/The-Outer-Womb/what-a-family-needs.html>

Bengkung Belly Binding – How to Self Bind Bengkung <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P-CNUI7FKG8>

Research studies supporting placenta encapsulation <http://www.placentawise.com/research-studies-supporting-placenta-encapsulation/>

Chiropractic for your postpartum body: <http://www.wcfamilychiro.com/post-partum-your-body-after-baby.html>