



Menstruation & Postpartum

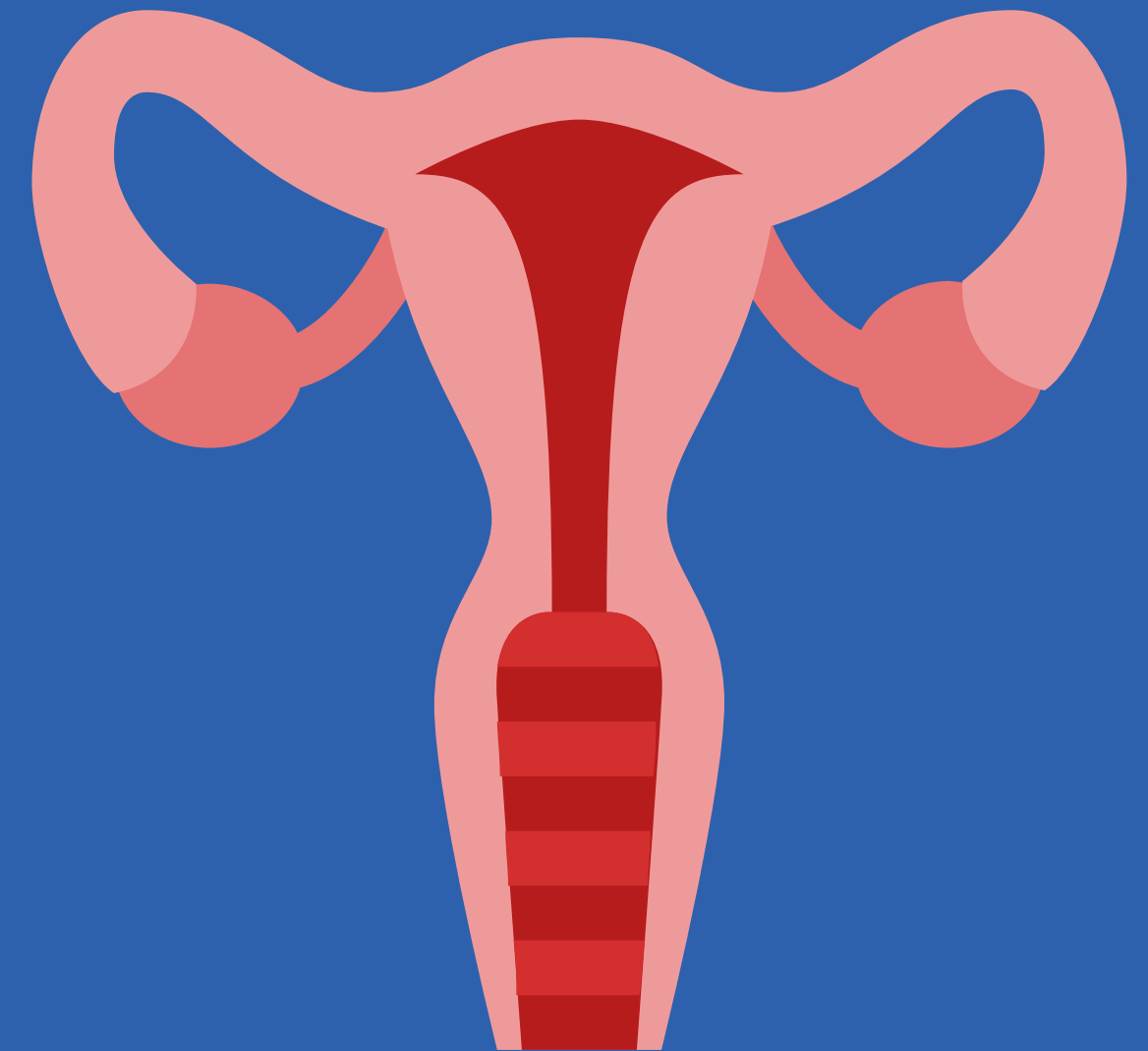
Self-Care Guidelines for Excellent Pelvic Health





What's special about the period & postpartum time?

- *The uterus is a self-cleaning organ.*
- *The monthly period & postpartum time are occasions when the uterus is undergoing a necessary cleanse.*
- *There are certain ways we can care for ourselves during these times, to support the uterus in cleansing most effectively -- promoting optimal pelvic health over time.*
- *Interestingly, the recommendations for period care and postpartum care overlap quite a lot!*



Be sure to read through to the end, for some links to additional resources!



Rest, Rest, Rest!

- *During the period, your body is actively producing additional blood, which flushes through the uterus and clears out its contents. This takes additional energy on your part!*
- *During the postpartum time, your body has just been through a big transformation -- labor! Even the word we use to describe that process tells us that it's not an easy task. It's crucial to make time to rest after any birth outcome (including miscarriage and abortion), no matter how many gestational weeks the pregnancy was.*



This tends to be the most difficult recommendation for people to embrace, but it's absolutely the most important.

If you're able to rest just a little bit more than you normally would, that's a step in the right direction... But I encourage you to reflect on what may be holding you back from caring for yourself in the ways you need to.

Nourish Yourself



Cold food (and drinks) can contribute to stagnation, which can lead to more intense cramps

What does the body require in order to produce additional blood (during the period), or to recover from an intense experience (postpartum)?

Good food.

... What is "good food"?

*Good food is nutrient-dense, easy to digest, and usually warm (try soups, stews, porridge).
Good food also means that you are eating enough (and usually erring on the side of more).*

Raw food, "health cleanses", and restrictive diets are generally not recommended



Stay Hydrated



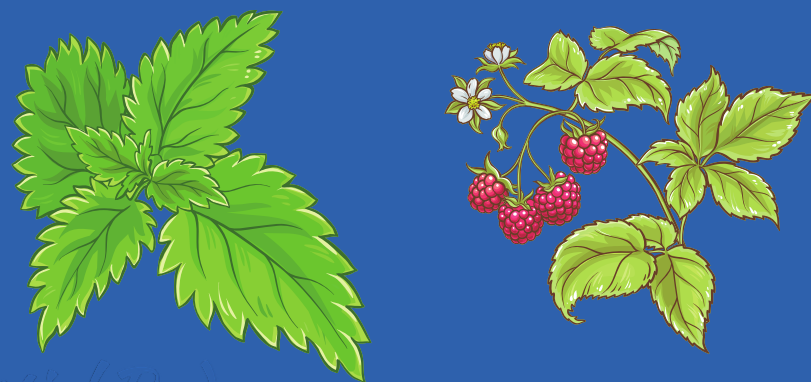
Your blood is made up of mostly water. For it to flow uninhibited & support a full uterine cleanse, it's essential to hydrate. Plain water is great, but so is hot tea.



Warming teas to promote blood flow:



Ginger, cinnamon, clove

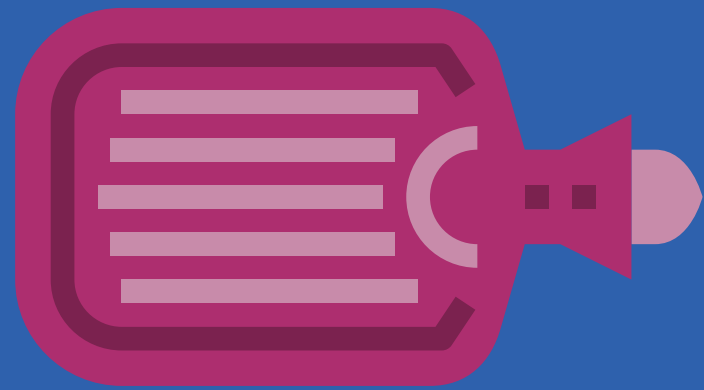
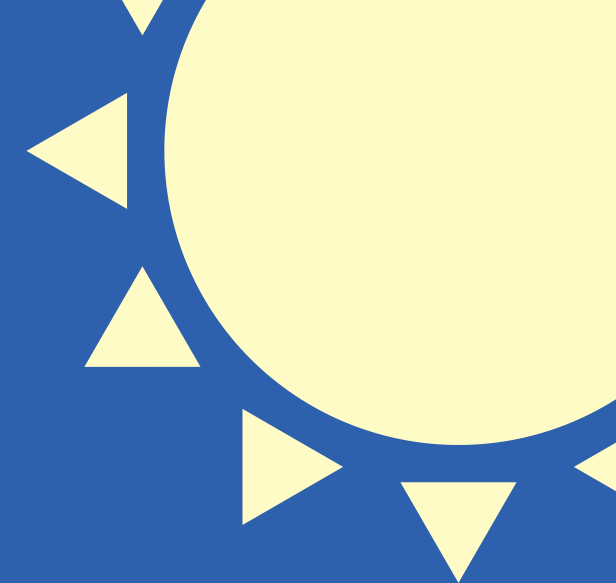


Mineral-rich teas to replenish blood supply:



Nettle leaf, red raspberry leaf





Keep Warm



Your blood moves through your body more easily when you are warm enough (again, because the blood is mostly water).

If blood gets cold, it slows down and stagnates, which can lead to an incomplete uterine cleanse.

Try a hot water bottle, extra layers of clothing, or even loosely tying a scarf around your abdomen to promote warmth in the pelvic area.

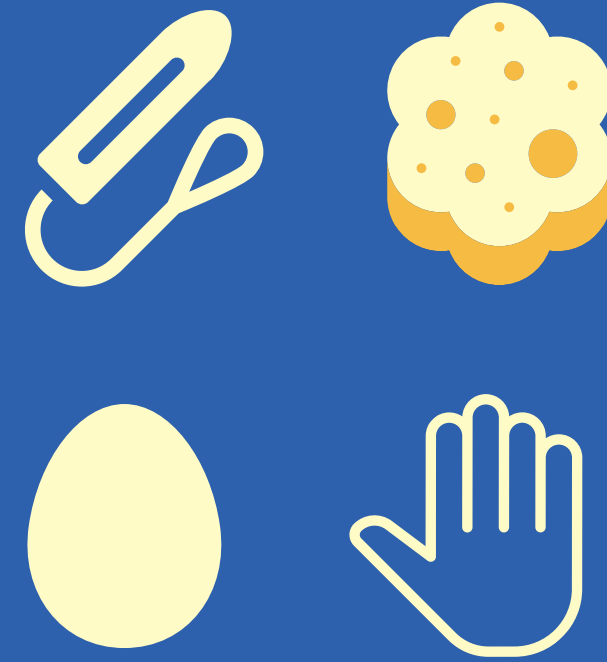


No Plugs

Plugging up the flow can contribute to cramps and heavy bleeding.

Your body is intelligent; if it's trying to clear out your uterus, and you place an object in your vagina that hinders that action, it's logical for your body to say (metaphorically), "Oh, well I should send more blood to try and clear the blockage! Or contract super hard to try and clear it!"

Most people don't enjoy cramps or heavy bleeding, and many people find immense relief from switching to pads or period panties.



What are "plugs"?

- Tampons
- Sea sponges
- Possibly menstrual cups
- Your partner's body parts
- Your jade yoni egg

"But I don't want to have to think about my period (that's why I use tampons)!"

Well, why don't you?

What is your belief about your body's own process that has you feeling so averse to it?

These questions aren't meant to be harsh; this is an invitation for you to reflect, & perhaps learn about the conditioning you've received around the topic of menstruation.





Creating Your Support System

Most of us do so much, and of course most of that stuff still has to be taken care of -- bleeding or not. Life keeps going during menstruation & postpartum, so how can we get the support we need (especially to rest more)?



Communication

Talk about what you need, in advance.



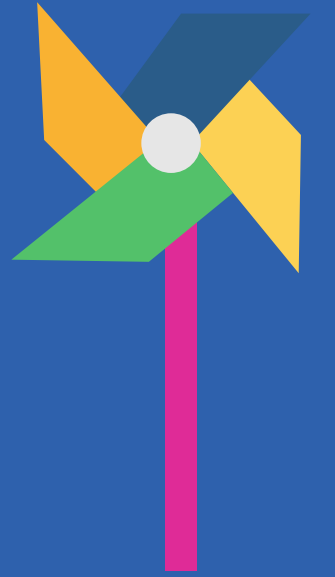
If you have a partner, talk with him/her about your needs during your period, and ask what he/she would be willing to step up & help with while you're bleeding, at least for the first 2-3 days. You may find that by resting more during days 1-4, the overall length of time that you bleed actually decreases.

Many lineages of traditional medicine recommend that a postpartum person rest in bed for 30-40 days following birth. You may want to consider hiring a postpartum doula, or confirming with several friends or relatives that they will come over and help around the house after you give birth.





What about the (other) kids?



Look to others, get creative, and ask for support when you need it.

Talk to your partner, your in-laws, your parents, local friends, an older local kid who wants babysitting experience (even if you're in the house semi-supervising).

This is an opportunity to set an example for your children: "I need to take care of myself, and this is how I honor that while still being present with you."

Maybe this is one time that you let the house get a little dirtier, or the dishes don't get done as fast. Sometimes just anticipating that this will happen, and reminding yourself that it's OK, will decrease your stress around it.



Meal Prep

This is another piece to work on in advance - keeping your own needs in mind, as well as your partner's, and other kids if you have them.

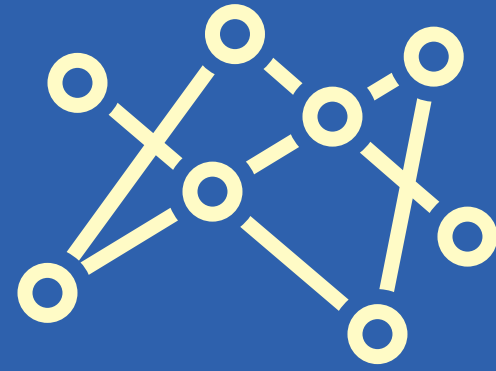


A lot of the best foods for your period & postpartum (soups, stews, and porridges) can be made in large batches, in advance.

What are some foods that your family loves, that you can prepare in advance, and freeze so they last longer?



Resources



1. Read more about menstruation & postpartum care - a series of instagram posts that go into greater detail on each aspect
2. Womb Cleanse Caretaker - an online course by Keli Garza, founder of Steamy Chick
3. Natural Hormone Healing Blog - free recipes that support hormonal balance
4. The Fourth Trimester: A Postpartum Guide to Healing Your Body, Balancing Your Emotions, and Restoring Your Vitality

Period Products:

- Period panties
 - Organic cotton pads
 - Menstrual cup
 - Organic cotton tampons
- ***For those that are truly unable to make the switch to non-plugging products, I recommend switching to a non-toxic product at the very least.



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Amelia Gray Photography

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