

## POST PREGNANCY



**1)Nutrition:** Post pregnancy focus on building your meals around a source of wholegrain carbohydrates, protein and healthy fats, I know some days you can barely get a moment to make a cup of tea let alone a healthy balanced plate but when you can try to nourish yourself well. Aim to include lots of fruits and vegetables in your diet and keep your water intake up. Focus on getting in your dairy foods to hit your calcium requirements for bone health and your oily fish for heart health. It's important to remember that mothers who choose to breastfeed require on average 300-500 extra calories per day to ensure they have the energy needed to heal, recover and produce nourishing milk for your baby. Try to avoid excess caffeine (something I find hard) as it may make baby jittery and unsettled. Be sure to check that medications or supplements are suitable to take while breastfeeding as compounds can pass from mum to baby through breast milk. Any queries ask your doctor or a dietitian.

**2)Fitness:** I made an effort to stay active throughout my pregnancy. Whether it was a short walk, a 20-minute circuit or a swim. I really have felt the benefits of it. Giving birth and the sleep deprivation that comes with having a new born can make exercise seem like a distant memory. My plan is to aim for a gradual return to exercise. Walking can be a great option to get started, consider a 10-minute stroll and as you regain your strength you can increase the frequency, duration and speed of your walks. Pregnancy and childbirth can put a big strain on our pelvic floor muscles and strengthening and retraining them post baby is super important. I would suggest seeking out a qualified women's health physio to help you with this. Also if you are signing up to any post baby fitness make sure you have an in-depth chat with whoever is doing it and make sure you are happy with their level of understanding of the post pregnancy body.

**3)Mental Health:** Becoming a new mum is an emotional roller coaster from the word go. The first few weeks can be demanding so it's important to take time for yourself. My advice would be not to be too hard on yourself, take all the help that is offered to you, sleep wherever possible and make the most of this time because it just goes so fast. Its normal to feel a little bit blue after the birth of your baby. The 'baby blues' typically set in 2-4 days after baby is born and for most it usually passes however for up to 1 in 6 mums, they can progress into post-natal depression. Talk to your doctor and someone in your support network if you are concerned.

**4)Seek out a support circle:** This is so important because although a new baby is amazing, it can be a lonely time. If you are at home all day with your new arrival, although an amazing time, it can mean a whole day without adult conversation or a 15-minute break for yourself. I joined a Mum group after I had my first baby and to this day it was one of the best decisions I made, those girls are my go too when I'm in a Mum wobble! Don't underestimate the power of the support of other Mamas (If you don't click with the first group you go too, try a few)

**5)Book in a 6-week check-up:** This is an important aspect of looking after yourself as a new mum. It allows your health care profession to check that you are recovering well from pregnancy and

childbirth, they can also monitor your body weight and blood pressure to ensure they are returning to normal. This appointment is crucial as it also gives you an opportunity to discuss any issues relating to your physical or mental health that might be bothering you. I go to my doctor and go to the women health physio at 6 weeks. Your body has done a huge amount, take the care of it that it deserves.

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