

# Conscious Choices, Blissful Birth

## Module 6 - Nesting for the 4th Trimester Post Natal Depletion

Most people think when they first read the title of this section that I am mistakenly saying it instead of postpartum depression. While postpartum depression is certainly an issue, and one that needs more attention than ever, the issue of post natal depletion is being ignored completely and is extremely important.

We need to think deeply about the process that occurs when we become pregnant. You will now be literally growing a tiny human inside of you. In order for each of their cells to be made there are vital nutrients that are required to build them, and each type of cell requires something different. This is a very important concept, because if you don't take in the extra nutrition yourself as mother then the baby will literally take it from your body. You likely won't notice anything at the time aside from feeling a little run down and fatigued, but that doesn't mean it's not happening.

The real danger often comes after the birth of the baby. Especially if you breastfeed which we still recommend regardless. If you breastfeed then you have to give your nutrients to the baby continuing after it's born. If you were to eat a proper diet that provides these extra nutrients then all would be well. However many moms simply don't know what to eat or don't have much time to prepare appropriate meals. So again, these vital nutrients will be pulled from their bodies.

### Post natal depletion symptoms

PND can show up in all different types of ways as different nutrients effect different body functions in different ways. The list below is not exhaustive (no pun intended) and there can be nearly infinite ways that this issue presents itself, however these are the most common symptoms that most women will experience. If you are experiencing any one of these symptoms or a combination of them which is more likely then you will want to do a little digging. This module is not intended to supersede the advice of your general physician and if you mark quite a few of these symptoms then we highly recommend that you discuss what you are learning here with your doctor so that they can help you get the testing you need an to manage it.

## Physical Symptoms

- fatigue
- “baby brain”
- insomnia or sleep problems
- waking without feeling rested
- “signs of aging” - such as dry skin, soft nails, brittle thinning hair, receding gums
- bruising easily
- sensitivity to light and sound
- poor digestion
- low libido

## Mental Symptoms (you're not crazy!) :

- fear
- anger
- sadness
- anxiety
- inability to cope
- sense of isolation
- sense of powerlessness

## Causes

There are quite a few things that will lead to the totality of what we are calling PND. Some of these things will be unavoidable but it's still important for moms to know so that they don't feel like they are going crazy.

- Brain restructuring - During the last trimester the brain will literally do some feng shui to get itself ready for a baby. You will need new skills such as extra sensory information to be able to understand the signals your new baby is giving you. This rewiring of the brain can leave you missing some of the skills you thought you had down pat before baby. Don't worry too much about this, it's temporary. Once the baby is about 6 months old you should start remembering not to put your keys in the fridge. If you don't notice things improving around this time, it's a sign that you have some other things factoring in to your PND.

- Too little sleep - obviously one will not be sleeping as much near to the end of pregnancy and once we have a baby. Adapting to baby's sleep schedule as quickly as you can will help to mitigate this as well as taking some support from other people so that you can catch up on sleep when you can. Keep in mind that the human sleep cycle is about 70-90 minutes, and while you can get deeper sleep if you get through more of these in a row, it can be super comforting to know that nature basically designed us to be able to get through a full sleep cycle before our infant wakes again to feed.

If your baby is waking more than every 90 minutes for more than a night or two it's important to have them checked out by either a pediatric chiropractor, a cranial worker and/or someone who will evaluate TOTs. Also, see our section in the birth plan module about co-sleeping and why it can help moms get more sleep.

— Nutrient Depletion - we already covered this and why it is so vital but it bears repeating. Unless you are eating a super nutrient rich diet throughout your pregnancy and after birth you will likely need some nutrient repletion.

- Increased Stress - In our modern world, we are programmed to be super busy. A new mom will often feel pressure to “get back to it” as far as chores, feeding her family, possibly work, socializing, taking pictures, posting on social media, and basically feeling the need to be super mom. This forced stress keeps our body in a “fight or flight” pattern instead of a “rest and digest” pattern. Staying in this too long not only obviously leads to feelings of stress, anxiety and even depression, but it will deplete organs such as the adrenals, thyroid and liver as our body tries to compensate for the constant abnormal rise in all the hormones that get produced by stress.

## **Alternate Causes**

While the general cause of these symptoms is simply just the depletion of normal nutrients from growing a baby, there are some other conditions that can pop up postpartum that are important to watch out for. This list includes:

- Hashimoto's thyroid disease and postpartum thyroiditis
- inflammatory bowel disease
- increased allergies
- true postpartum depression and postpartum psychosis
- traumatic birth
- lack of support

## **Timeline**

Post natal depletion can set in right away, especially if the mother was not in the best of health before the pregnancy. However, it can set in up to ten years down the road depending on the slow nature of the depletion. This will be compounded if mama has more than one baby. If there is never an effort to make up some of the deficits from a first baby, one can only imagine that it would get worse and worse with each subsequent birth.

If you are reading this, it's likely that you are pregnant, but it might not be your first

## What can I do?

Let's think about this as logically as possible. Before we dive into some of the potential places where you are missing nutrients, let's talk about the solutions as these will apply for most people whether they are pregnant now, dealing with some PND or just trying to prevent.

So that means we need to get into the nutrition. This is more heavily covered in our prenatal nutrition module, so be sure to use that as a resource. The key is that you need to get in extra nutrients. We need to face facts that in most modern western diets there isn't even enough nutrition to support a person let alone a person growing a human. This is evident in the fact that most women are immediately put on a prenatal to increase their nutrients. The fact is that even most prenatal vitamins will not cover the nutrients required to build a baby so we need to bolster the nutrition. Please review the prenatal nutrition module for the best practices here. Below, we will talk about some of the key deficiencies and support for those particular items, but I want to be clear that we should always look to bolster through real food nutrition before we add in supplemental support.

## What's missing?

Most often what we are missing are called micronutrients. People are usually aware enough of macronutrients like fats, carbs and proteins to know they should try to have some semblance of balance in these, but we often fail to think about the nutrient value of the foods we eat in the tiny components. The micronutrients that are essential for cellular function are:

- Iron
- Zinc
- Vitamin B12
- Vitamin D3
- Magnesium
- Trace elements (iodine, selenium, manganese)
- Other B vitamins
- Vitamin C
- Fat soluble vitamins A, E and K2

This section is not meant for to run out to the nearest vitamin shop and grab a bottle of each of these things are start stuffing them down your throat. For one thing, these supplements are generally synthetic which means they will be harder for your body to absorb, and the last thing we want to do right now is make things more difficult for your body. What we really want to do is start consuming a few more nutritious foods that can help up get our levels back up to snuff.

If you try consuming nutrient dense foods for a few weeks and are still feeling like crap, that is a great time to see either a naturally minded MD, a chiropractor specializing in prenatal/postnatal care or nutrition, a naturopath or a functional medicine practitioner to help test your baseline levels and see what more you need.

### **Food/nutrition suggestions:**

Nettles Tea Infusion - this will cover you in both iron and magnesium and has a beautiful ability to help balance hormones postpartum. Steep 1 Oz (1 cup!) of organic dried nettles in boiling water for 1 minute, then turn off heat and sit overnight or at least 8 hours, strain, and drink either hot or over ice.

Organic/pastured red meat - this contains your B vitamins, bonus points if you are brave enough to do organ meats like liver which are even higher in nutrient content. You don't have to go nuts here, just a few ounces per day can go a long way.

Fruits and veggies - these are high in many nutrients but especially vitamin C. Citrus fruits contain high levels of vitamin C and berries contain a lot of other awesome antioxidants.

Vitamin D3 can best be obtained by just 30 minutes in direct sunlight. What's that? You live in the north and its winter like 2/3 of the year? Living in the northern Midwest of the US most of my life I know what you're saying, and getting sun can be tough. This would be an instance where supplementation is appropriate.

Supplementation can also be appropriate for trace minerals. Get yourself to a health food store that has a WHOLE FOOD based trace mineral supplement to get in your selenium etc.

Anything else?

Outside of repletion of nutrients, you may also want to revisit the prenatal stress course and use some of the suggestions there in order to help get your hormones, sleep and body back on track. And don't be afraid to ask people for help. While some mamas feel selfish or unworthy asking for someone to come watch their baby just so they can shower or sleep, these things can be huge in getting yourself back to "normal". And trust us, you will be the best mom you can be when you are also taking care of yourself. Remember, even though your babe is tiny, it is already watching and learning. The philosophy your kiddo will take around self care and self worth starts with seeing how we take care of ourselves, so its crucial to value ourselves the way that we want our kids to value themselves