

pregnancy & new baby

herbs and hormones

by Natasha Berman *



**Are you suffering from pnd? have you considered an holistic approach?
here are some ideas that could help.**

Pregnancy, birth and the first few months of motherhood are daunting at best. Add to this the plethora of information and advice most new mums receive, and it's no wonder many are overwhelmed. But instead of seeking support, many feel pressured to be seen to be coping.

At around six weeks, after the initial adrenalin and external support dissipates, many women can find themselves feeling utterly overwhelmed for long periods of time. This can be a symptom of Postnatal Depression (PND), as can being unable to cope or concentrate, being overcome with sadness, frequent crying, anxiety and panic attacks.

Other contributors to PND can include hormonal and biochemical factors. Low

levels of zinc, essential fatty acids and B vitamins are all associated with increased risk of PND, so make sure you include plenty of nutrient-rich foods in your diet such as egg yolks (runny), brewers yeast, seaweed, wheat-germ, nuts, pulses and dark green leafy vegetables; as well as oily fish for omega 3. Adequate protein is essential for healthy neurotransmitter production and iron levels are also important. Elevated copper can also negatively impact on mood and energy following birth.

It's also worth considering a personalised herbal prescription, which may include the use of herbs such as Chaste Tree,

Withania, St John's Wort, Lemon Balm, Lavender; or a traditional Bach Flower Remedy, including Pine, Larch, Walnut, Elm, Aspen, Sweet Chestnut, Hornbeam, Gentian, Star of Bethlehem, White Chestnut.

It is important to talk about it with your partner, friend, family member or GP. Good self care is first and foremost. This means adequate rest, sleep, water, support, good food and good supplements. Spend some time outside, do some gentle exercise, see friends, have a laugh, do what brings you joy. A little bit of nurturing goes a long way: try massages, essential oils, baths, foot rubs and treats.

Seek professional help where needed.

There are plenty of support groups and good counsellors and therapists specialising in PND.

For more information:

www.postnataldistress.org.nz

www.plunket.org.nz

www.mentalhealth.org.nz

** Recently appointed to the board of the Post Natal Distress (PND) Organisation, Naturopath and Medical Herbalist Natasha Berman is committed, through her practice and her first-hand experience, to helping educate and empower women suffering from PND. For more information on holistic health, visit her website: www.qhealth.co.nz*