



LIFESTYLE

Being a first time mom

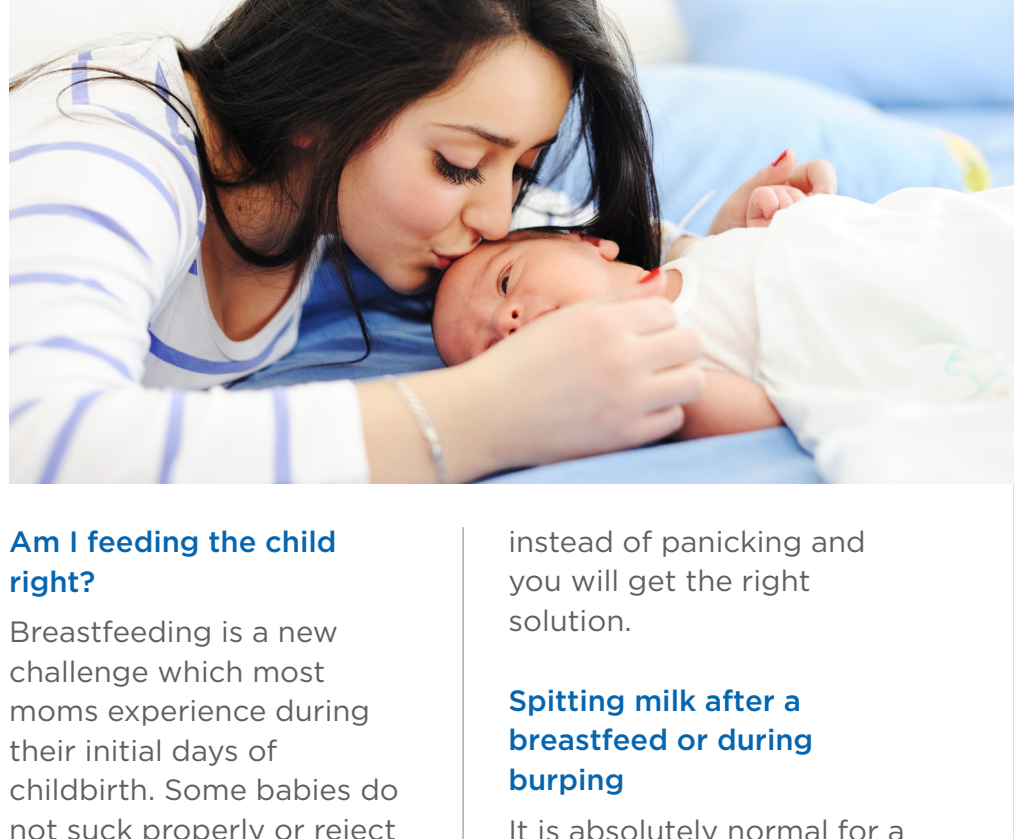
Becoming a parent can be a bit overwhelming and being a first-time mom has its own set of challenges as you get introduced to a lot of new things, ranging from breastfeeding to soothing a crying baby. Most first-time moms go into motherhood with expectations. What they'll be like as a mom, how they'll feel and even what the baby will be like. But your idea of parenthood and the reality of being a parent will likely be two very different things. The truth is in the first few weeks, you'll learn a lot about yourself and being a parent.

As your little one depends on you for everything, your responsibility increases. You may be quite anxious about the situation. It is alright to worry, just remember not allow it to overpower you.

Some of the common situations that most moms face are:

Why is my baby crying frequently?

In the initial months, you will notice your baby crying frequently. Instead of stressing on the eating and sleeping habits or what could be wrong with the child, find ways of soothing your child and get him / her to adapt to the people and surroundings.



Am I feeding the child right?

Breastfeeding is a new challenge which most moms experience during their initial days of childbirth. Some babies do not suck properly or reject the breast milk. Instead of thinking of alternatives, it is always advisable to reach out to your doctor who will provide you with the right solution.

Handling the newborn

It can be an overwhelming experience to get through the child's routine. Be it giving the child a bath, feeding or clipping the nails. These routine things can make you feel nervous. But, nevertheless, following your maternal instincts will help you cater to all the needs of your baby confidently.

Bowel movement

The bowel movement of your child is not constant. It could be too frequent or no bowel movement for days. An irregular routine can upset you. If you notice any abnormal change in the bowel movement or color, reach out to the doctor

instead of panicking and you will get the right solution.

Spitting milk after a breastfeed or during burping

It is absolutely normal for a baby to spit up some milk immediately after a breastfeed or during burping. This should not be a cause of concern. If the baby is regularly spitting or throwing up and not gaining weight, then it is the time to consult a doctor.

Changing diapers

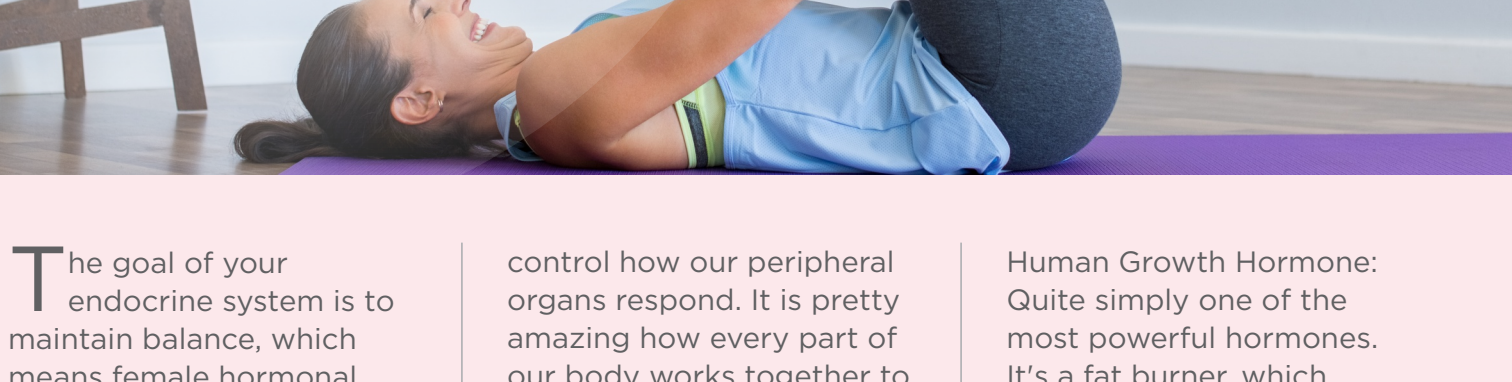
Changing diapers is another important thing as your child diapers get soiled almost after every feed during the initial days. Not changing the diapers will not only make the child uncomfortable but will also be prone to infections.

These are few guidelines and there are numerous things that you need to take care of for your newborn. However, remember this experience of a lifetime which you will always cherish!



FITNESS

Balancing hormones with exercise



The goal of your endocrine system is to maintain balance, which means female hormonal health is more than reproductive health, it is whole body health.

Hormones control heart rate, sleep cycles, sexual function, and reproduction. The metabolism, appetite, mood, stress, and body temperatures are all affected by hormones which largely affect a woman's function of life.

Hormones, the chemical messengers, are responsible for our weight, mood, appearance, energy, anxiety levels and even fertility. Even a slight imbalance in our hormones can wreck our well-being and hence, it is important that they remain balanced.

Physical activity strongly influences hormonal health. Apart from improving blood flow to your muscles, exercise increases hormone receptors.

Will exercise help in maintaining hormonal balance?

Absolutely, as the amount of movement and physical activity we do daily makes a huge impact on the hormonal responses of the body. Our heart rate and the activation of our nervous system also cause our brain to release various hormones, which ultimately

control how our peripheral organs respond. It is pretty amazing how every part of our body works together to ultimately carry out a mission.

Exercise has a powerful effect on balancing, suppressing, and increasing certain hormones. Excess oestrogen, insulin, and cortisol are the hormones responsible for weight gain, while HGH, testosterone, and progesterone are the ones responsible for keeping us lean. Leptin is another hormone, which, when too low, signals your body to store fat.

Which hormones are impacted by exercise?

Epinephrine/Norepinephrine: Responds to stress, either physical or psychological.

Insulin: Made by the pancreas on the arrival of glucose into the bloodstream, it rises and falls according to what you eat.

Cortisol: Cortisol is produced by the adrenal glands in response to stress, low blood sugar and exercise.

Oestrogen: A wonderful hormone in the right amount, it makes conception and pregnancy possible. It's also a natural mood lifter.

Human Growth Hormone: Quite simply one of the most powerful hormones. It's a fat burner, which forces your body to draw energy from your fat reserves first.

Testosterone: It's vitally important for women as it builds muscle, burns fat, increases energy and sex drive, and strengthens bones.

Progesterone: A hormone that regulates menstrual function and pregnancy.

Serotonin: Physical activity releases serotonin, which promotes a good night's rest. Increasing your serotonin levels can boost mood, appetite, digestion, memory, and sexual drive.

Splitting your workouts between cardio, resistance, high intensity exercise and yoga will ensure you're balancing all of the major male and female hormones, cortisol and insulin. Cardio, for example, is helpful in balancing oestrogen, the primary female sex hormone. When levels of oestrogen are too high or low, it can lead to bloating or water retention, menstrual cycle issues and mood swings. A lack of oestrogen can also put women at more risk of developing both breast and ovarian cancer².



LIVING WELL

Healthy eating and women

Choosing healthy foods and drinks more often can help prevent or manage many health problems that affect women. Women have unique nutritional needs. By eating well at every stage of life, you can control cravings, manage your weight, boost your energy, and look and feel your best.

A balanced eating pattern is a cornerstone of health. Women should enjoy a variety of healthful foods from all of the food groups, including whole grains, fruits, vegetables, healthy fats, low-fat or fat-free dairy and lean protein. But women also have special nutrient needs, and, during each stage of a woman's life, these needs change.

Eating right

Nutrient-rich foods provide energy for women's busy lives and help to reduce the risk of disease. A healthy eating plan regularly includes:

- At least three ounce-equivalents of whole grains such as whole-grain bread, whole-wheat cereal flakes, whole-wheat pasta, bulgur, quinoa, brown rice or oats.
- Three servings of low-fat or fat-free dairy products including milk, yogurt or cheese; or calcium-fortified soyamilk.
- Five to five-and-a-half ounce-equivalents of

protein foods such as lean meat, poultry, seafood, eggs, beans, lentils, tofu, nuts and seeds.

- One-and-a-half to two cups of fresh fruits without added sugars.
- Two to two-and-a-half cups of fresh colourful vegetables without added salt.

The nutritional needs of a woman

The nutritional requirements for boys and girls as children are similar. But when puberty begins, women start to develop unique nutritional requirements. And as we age and our bodies go through more physical and hormonal changes, our nutritional needs continue to evolve, making it important that our diets evolve to meet these changing needs.

To ensure you get all the nutrients you need from the food you eat, try to aim for a diet rich in fruit, vegetables, quality protein, healthy fats, and low in processed, fried, and sugary foods.

Most health experts recommend that you eat a balanced, healthy diet to maintain or to lose weight. But exactly what is a healthy diet?

- Protein (found in fish, meat, poultry, dairy products, eggs, nuts, and beans)

- Fat (found in animal and dairy products, nuts, and oils)

- Carbohydrates (found in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and beans and other legumes)

- Vitamins (Such as A, B, C, D, E, and K)

- Minerals (such as calcium, potassium, and iron)

- Water (both in what you drink, and what's naturally in foods)

Balancing calories with activity

Since women typically have less muscle, more body fat and are smaller than men, they need fewer calories to maintain a healthy body weight and activity level. Women who are more physically active may require more calories. Physical activity is an important part of a woman's health. Regular physical activity helps with muscle strength, balance, flexibility and stress management³.



MIND, BODY & SOUL

Strengthening the harmony and balance in mind, body and soul

People usually neglect and ignore their inner self. When it comes to holistic fitness of a being, people are no more "inter-connected between mind, body and soul". The phrase "mind, body, and soul" refers to the connection and relationship between these three aspects of yourself.

Mind: Your mind is your thinking mind (both conscious and unconscious) that is responsible for your beliefs, thoughts, and actions.

Body: Your body is the physical aspect of yourself that carries you through life and allows you to experience the world through your five senses.

Soul: Your soul or spirit is that intangible part of you that you might refer to as your essence.

You have probably heard of the mind-body-soul connection, but might not be sure what it means and how it affects your well-being. Mind-body-soul means that our wellness comes not just from physical health, but from mental health and spiritual health as well. To be "healthy," we must pay attention to all three aspects of our nature.

Here are a few tips to help balance your mind, body and soul

- Exercise: Find an exercise that you enjoy. Exercise boosts mood by pumping oxygen into the brain and releasing feel-good endorphins

- Feeling grateful: Start appreciating the things you have in your life. The health benefits of gratitude and the very simple act of it can help relieve stress, strengthen social relationships and more

- Sleep well: Sleep helps regenerate your body. The more you sleep, the better you are the next day

- Deep breathing: Develop the habit of deep breaths throughout the day. Deep breathing helps in stress relief, lower blood pressure and more focus.

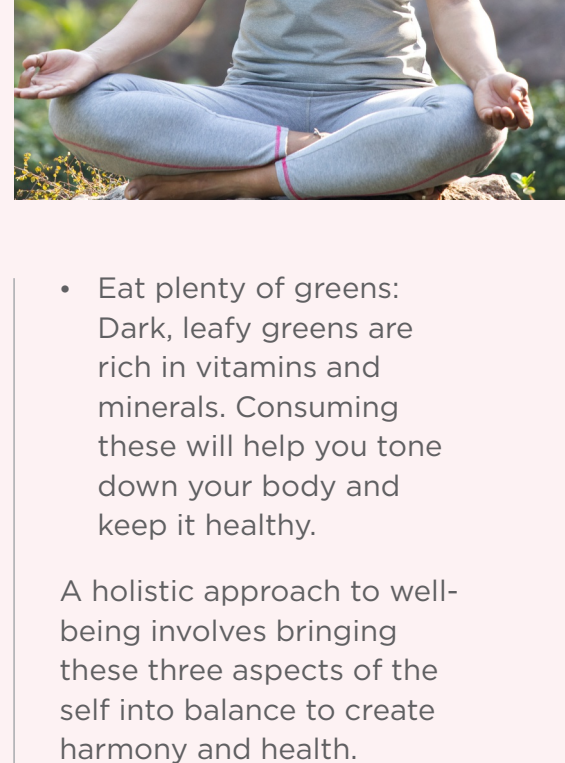
- Yoga: One exercise which is good for mind and body. Yoga is a perfect one to bring harmony and balance in mind, body and soul.

- Smile more: Smiling helps you feel great and make you feel happier and stress free

- Chase your passions: Doing what you love the most can help you bring in a perfect harmony to your own self. It keeps you occupied and stress free

- Meditate: This is the time when you need to rest your mind. Start with a small duration and make it a regular practice.

- Spend time with nature: Getting out in green space can help lower your risk of developing certain neurological conditions and also maintain a stress-free life



- Eat plenty of greens: Dark, leafy greens are rich in vitamins and minerals. Consuming these will help you tone down your body and keep it healthy.

A holistic approach to well-being involves bringing these three aspects of the self into balance to create harmony and health.

As we become balanced and harmonious, the unavoidable pressures of life have less impact on us. We respond to situations more consciously, and our interactions with people & situations become more purposeful, calm and relaxed. We feel union and harmony everywhere, whether it's an office meeting, a small talk with our kids, or a social affair. Our outer world reflects the same perspective that we feel in our harmonious inner world. Live up, connect the elements of your existence and find more meaning from life!⁴

Source

¹ Tian, C. (2018, October 31). 12 Tips for First-Time Moms. FirstCry Parenting. <https://parenting.firstcry.com/articles/12-tips-for-first-time-moms/>

² McCall, P. (2015, August 10). Exercise and Hormones: 8 Hormones Involved in Exercise. AceFitness. <https://www.acefitness.org/resources/pros/expert-articles/5593/exercise-and-hormones-8-hormones-involved-in-exercise/>

³ Esther et al. (2022, May 9). Healthy Eating For Women. Eat Right. <https://www.eatright.org/food/nutrition/dietary-guidelines-and-myplate/healthy-eating-for-women>

⁴ Agrawal, S. (2022). Most people neglect their inner self: Life coach. IANS Live. https://ianslive.in/index.php?param=interview/Most_people_neglect_their_inner_self_Life_coach_J-206