

8 Wellness Tips to a Holistic Pregnancy



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As a naturopath, yoga teacher and now mum, my passion has grown for pregnancy and highlighted how we can be more mindful throughout our pregnancies. Making the smallest changes enables you to enrich your pregnancy to make it enjoyable and healthy for you and bub. I feel it is vitally important to have a holistic view to nourish ALL elements of you, including the physical, emotional and spiritual throughout this life-changing chapter.

These are my Top Wellness Tips for a Holistic Pregnancy

1. Nervous System Support

This topic would be one of the 'big guys' to address. Not only for the emotions that are raging through pregnancy but also because of the physical effect it has on your body and bub. Throughout the pregnancy and especially in trimester 2, your bub is using a lot of your nutrients to help grow his/her neurotransmitters. We want a mentally strong and happy bub, however it can leave you feeling flat, anxious, sleepless, angry and even depressed if there are no nutrients left for your own neurotransmitters.

This is where B vitamins and Essential Fatty Acids (EFAs) are vital in pregnancy.

These nutrients assist your 'happy' pathways such as GABA, Serotonin, Dopamine and Melatonin to continue working efficiently, reducing the stress that can pop up in pregnancy and providing strong nourishment for bubs neuro and brain development. With mental health and post-natal depression on the rise supporting your nervous system with supplementation is crucial for gratifying pregnancy outcomes. Be sure to speak to your natural health practitioner for what would suit your pregnancy best.

2. Protein

Protein is essential for the growth of bub and also many facets of keeping mum healthy and happily embracing pregnancy. Protein helps to regulate blood sugar (sugar cravings), reduce morning sickness, fight fatigue, repair tissue post-birth for mum, and importantly is required for baby's organ and tissue growth. Pregnancy requires an abundance of protein as baby will be quick in taking what he needs leaving mum feeling tired, emotional, craving sugar - or all three!

An easy way to increase your protein is through daily smoothies, adding naturally sourced protein powder, nuts, seeds, cacao, hemp or chia seeds, just to name a few. I recommend ensuring there is a protein source with every meal and snack to ensure a nutrient dense pregnancy.

3. Digestive support

Having a healthy, functioning digestive system throughout pregnancy will enhance the absorption of nutrients. As baby grows there is less space in the abdomen so we regularly see symptoms such as reflux, heartburn, constipation, diarrhoea and general discomfort. You can support digestion by eating 1 tsp of sauerkraut or kimchi daily, taking a probiotic (especially in the 3rd trimester), avoiding refined sugars and carbohydrates, and keeping grain intake to a minimum (due to the inflammatory effect on gut linings). A regular practice of pranayama is also highly beneficial. By practicing pranayama the breath will help relax the nervous system allowing it to fall into the parasympathetic state (rest and digest) that assists digestion of your food. Lastly, ensuring that you are in a calm state before eating will help enhance the many benefits of mindful eating.

4. Hydration

Hydration seems like a no-brainer, however we all know that simple fluid intake isn't always top priority. Fluids are even more important when pregnant - not only for hydration, but can also help reduce headaches, fluid retention and those nasty 'cankles'. You can keep electrolytes high by drinking coconut water or, adding coconut water and Himalayan salt to your water bottle. This will deliver a balance of minerals to ensure the water crosses over the blood brain barrier and into the cell, helping to hydrate optimally.

5. Education = Empowerment

The biggest piece of advice I hand out is EDUCATION = EMPOWERMENT. Pregnancy can be confusing and stressful with the many different opinions out there. The endless decisions around foods, scans, vaccines, birthing options are endless. No 'one' way is the only way. I advocate doing your own research (education) in areas that are of interest to you. It is a good idea to research recommendations from different practitioners as well as with people who are like-minded and have similar values. From here you can check in with what sits right with you, and call upon that beautiful motherly intuition to help make decisions that will leave you feeling empowered. Attending workshops such as 'Hypnobirth', 'Calmbirth' and connecting with prenatal yoga classes can all help in finding more information about creating a holistic pregnancy and birth suited to you. Above everything else don't be afraid to ask the questions, and stand your ground. Questions help us decide on the path we wish to walk. It is important once you have made your educated choices to not to be swayed by family, society or medical pressures.

6. Connection with Baby

In the early stages of pregnancy before you feel any movement, connection can be naturally quite challenging. Life continues as normal aside from keeping your 'secret' special and feeling a little under the weather. However this is a beautiful sacred time where you have the space and opportunity to embrace the essence of the creation growing inside. A brilliant way to do this is through yoga. While being aware of the contraindicated poses for pregnancy (best to check with your yoga teacher), there are many poses that will support this connection and nourish your changing and hormonally 'busy' body. A simple restorative pose such as Balasana can enhance the 'third eye connection' with Mother Earth, and is also beautiful for grounding helping with morning sickness. Other nurturing practices such as Savasana and Supta Baddha Konasana can help the bonding process with bub. Simply place your hands onto your womb space and breathe love and light into your growing little being. Visualisation around baby and your pregnancy is a divine way to connect with bub before you feel movement around week 15. Making time for yoga will certainly set you on the right path throughout your pregnancy and labour.

7. Blood Building

Anaemia (low iron) as well as low blood count is quite common in pregnancy due to the increased demand from sharing blood and iron with baby. Ensuring your diet is rich in iron and blood-building foods throughout pregnancy will potentially reduce many issues arising. Having great levels of iron rich blood and combining this with delayed cord clamping, will give bub the best start to life instead of trying to play catch up post birth. Iron rich foods are dark green leafy vegetables, beetroot, lamb, beef, molasses, cacao, pine nuts, seeds and bone broth. While bone broth may not be something to make yourself there are many options found in health food stores and cafes offering all premade. Adding kale and parsley to smoothies or juices will also help to build your blood count.

8. Take care of You

Above everything else during pregnancy the biggest factor and sometimes the hardest, is to TAKE CARE OF YOU. If you are a natural giver in your life you quickly need to learn how to receive. If there is ever a time to put yourself first - this is it! Getting adequate sleep, connecting with nature, doing yoga, mindfulness, meditation and generally slowing down to pamper yourself can help with your overall wellbeing - there is no limit! Importantly, gaining emotional support through this transitional period of life is essential - you don't have to be sad to talk with someone it may just be for the added support to help process the lifestyle changes that are occurring.

Lastly, connecting with other pregnant mamas and like-minded souls is incredibly useful as you step into this exciting new chapter as a Mother. Above all, remember to embrace each moment of this journey. Each step has a purpose and there is ample personal growth to achieve from carrying a beautiful bub inside.

What's Next for your Pregnancy?

If you would like more knowledge about a holistic pregnancy and how to embrace the natural beauty of your pregnancy through knowledge, meditation and yoga, check out Talita's Essential Holistic Pregnancy Kit. Which includes

- The week by week Holistic Pregnancy Guide, Daily Bump Yoga Practice video and Baby Connection Meditation.

The ebook is a week to week guide on your baby's growth and full of information from both medical and holistic views, so you can understand the science as well as the traditional knowledge of the growth of your bub-to-be. Talita shares her personal journey through pregnancy each week and challenges she experienced. It is the complete supportive manual including nutrition advice, recipes and helpful tips to embrace your pregnancy.... naturally.

Available to buy from Talita's website www.lahlita.com.au

