

I Deserve Birth Support

Online Course for Pregnant & New Mamas



Healing Herb Baths for New Mamas

The postpartum bath is a tradition that my midwifery clients have enjoyed for over 30 years, one that I enjoyed after my own babies were born, and one that I now use as my grown children have their babies. There are many herbs that can be used to soothe tender perineal tissue, heal tears and episiotomies (yes, you CAN take herb baths if you've had stitches!), reduce inflammation, and even shrink hemorrhoids after a vaginal birth. (Sorry - immersion in a bath is not appropriate after a cesarean - but foot soaks with any relaxing herbs, for example, lavender blossoms and rose petals are an absolutely delicious way to relax and treat yourself to something special!)

Preparing the bath is as simple as making a giant pot of tea, and the medicinal liquid can also be made into compresses and peri-rinses as directed below. The bath can be given as soon as an hour after a vaginal birth as long as long as mom is healthy and there are no signs of infection. A fresh bath can be taken once or twice daily for three to five days after birth. Baby can accompany mama into the herbal bath, which also promotes drying and healing of the umbilical cord.

When I was dispensing my own botanical products, I generally had to refill orders for

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postpartum bath herbs several times as women find them so soothing! So assemble enough herbs or purchase enough herb bath bags for at least 1-2 baths/day for 5 days plus some extra for use in a peri-rinse (squeeze bottle).

MY 2 FAVE HERB BATH BLENDS FOR NEW MAMAS

HERBAL BATH I: POSTPARTUM DELIGHT

A blend of beautiful and fragrant blossoms that is uplifting, soothing, healing, and antiseptic.

Mix and store these herbs:

- 1 ounce dried comfrey leaf*
- 1 ounce calendula flowers
- 1 ounce lavender flowers
- 1/2 ounce dried uva ursi leaves
- 1/2 ounce witch hazel blossoms
(if you can find them)
- 1/2 ounce dried sage leaf
- 1/2 cup sea salt



Directions: Bring 2 quarts of water to a boil. Turn off heat, and place 1 ounce (approximately 1 large handful) of the above mixed herbs (not the salt) into the pot. Steep, covered, for 30 minutes.

Strain the liquid well with a fine mesh strainer, and discard the herb material. Add 2 quarts of liquid to the tub, along with the **1/2 cup of salt**.

HERBAL BATH II: DEEP HEALING BATH

Strongly antiseptic and astringent, perfect for healing trauma to the perineum, including tears and episiotomies.

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MIX AND STORE THESE HERBS:

- 1 ounce dried comfrey leaf*
- 1 ounce yarrow blossoms
- 1/2 ounce myrrh powder
- 1 ounce dried rosemary leaf
- 6 cloves of fresh garlic
- 1/2 cup of sea salt

Directions: Peel all the garlic cloves and place them in a blender with 1 cup of water. Blend at high speed until you have a milky liquid and the garlic is completely pulverized. Strain through a fine mesh strainer. Bring 2 quarts of water to a boil and turn off heat. Add 1 ounce of the dried herb blend to the pot and steep for 30 minutes.

Strain the liquid and discard the herb material. Add 1 cup of the garlic “milk” and the herb tea to the bath, along with 1/2 cup of salt.

Do not use include the garlic milk for use in a peribottle or compress – it would be too irritating. The tea without the garlic, however, can be used directly.

HERBAL COMPRESSES AND RINSES

To use the teas as herbal compresses: Simply soak a washcloth in the herbal tea and apply warm or cold to the perineum as needed to reduce tenderness and swelling.

For use in peri-rinses: Purchase a peri bottle (a plastic squeeze bottle) from any pharmacy and fill with the strained tea of your choice. Squeeze warm or at room temperature over your perineal area as you urinate. This significantly reduces inflammation and stinging.

THE SITZ BATH

If you don't feel like fully immersing, or don't have a tub at home, try a sitz bath instead. A sitz bath is a basin that fits perfectly into your toilet seat and let's you get a soothing soak of the important parts after a vaginal birth without having to immerse in the tub. Sitz bath basins are inexpensive and available at many pharmacies, Target, and Walmart.

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IS COMFREY SAFE FOR USE IN HERBAL BATHS?

You may have heard rumors that comfrey root and leaf are not safe for use in herb baths. This is based on the fact that a chemical compound in comfrey leaves, Pyrrolizidine alkaloids (PA), are known to cause liver damage in rare cases when taken internally. While this compound can also be absorbed through skin abrasions and open wounds, the amount is tiny, and there is not evidence that this can cause hepatotoxicity or problems for baby through exposure in the bath. If, however, you are uncomfortable with using it, simply skip this ingredient and increase the volume of the others to make up the difference.

WHERE DO I GET HERBS FOR THE HERB BATH?

Assembling your own herb baths is easy – you just purchase the amounts of each herb you need, and mix them together in a large glass jar, tupperware, or plastic bag for storage until it's time to use them.

Bulk herbs for mixing your own baths can be purchased online from Mountain Rose Herbs.

You can also purchase pre-assembled herb baths from Motherlove which offers a wonderful herb bath in a container that makes it a beautiful gift for your favorite new mama! Wish Garden Herbs makes a lovely postpartum herb bath blend that can be purchased from the company or on Amazon.

For more helpful, healthful, and healing information for new mamas check out one of my favorite books I've written: *Natural Health After Birth!*

And if you want to learn to use herbal medicines extensively, here's the link to REGISTER for my distance learning program, Herbal Medicine for Women – the most comprehensive women's herb course in the world – truly!