

Placenta Encapsulation: Your Postnatal Feel Good Pill

By Kheyrne Danu

No woman should have to start her journey into motherhood with the immobilizing experience of postnatal depression (PND). Yet this century has seen a consistent rise in this debilitating condition. Thankfully women today have discovered the happy pill that really works!

After decades of research scientists have been dumbfounded by [postnatal depression](#). No drug or supplement has been able to cure this elusive state of being. But what if it wasn't a disorder as much as a deficiency? What if humans had eliminated a vital component of post birth recovery without realizing it?

All mammals eat their placenta and many indigenous cultures have been known to do the same. Whether it is cooked into a broth, steamed or dried, indigenous cultures found ways of making the placenta as appealing as possible to ingest. Yet with the modernization of man, the idea of such an act has been far from our thoughts. Little did we know that this 'nutritional factory' possesses profound benefits for mother as well as baby.

Science has now discovered the placenta contains a large array of vitamins, minerals and hormones that deeply replenish a woman after the intense process of birth. Today the elegant art of [placenta encapsulation](#) allows women to discreetly ingest their placenta without feeling irked out by the whole affair. Using a dehydrator, the placenta is dried at a low temperature to ensure all the valuable nutrients are kept intact. It's then ground into a powder and neatly placed into capsules.

Actresses Kourtney Kardashian, January Jones and [Alicia Silverstone](#) have all done it and now rave about the benefits of placenta encapsulation.

Sister Sandy Standish, a private midwife in Cape Town, became involved with placenta encapsulation after a mother due with her third baby requested placenta encapsulation to prevent postnatal depression. She had experienced severe PND with her second child and was determined not to go through the same nightmare with her third baby. It worked beautifully. She was even baking cookies, which was unheard of even when she only had two children.

Standish shares, "In the mammalian world it is a very common factor, most animals will eat the placenta. An old midwives remedy for hemorrhaging is in fact to give the mother a raw piece of placenta to eat and it does in fact stop the hemorrhage. There are anecdotal and wisdoms that have been passed through the ages in ancient cultures that include using placenta remedies and benefits for the mother and the baby.

The placenta is full of stem cells, which enhances the mother's recovery and increases her overall vitality and wellbeing. Visually, there is a clear look of vitality in women that are taking placenta capsules. Even a mother who had frozen her placenta decided to defrost and

encapsulate it after plummeting to the depths of postnatal depression. She said that she couldn't believe the massive difference she felt after just 3 days.

Placenta encapsulation is really about replacing necessary hormones and vitality back into the system. During the pregnancy the placenta has been taking from the mother's system to feed the baby, but after the baby has been born it can now replenish the mother's system once again and give the mother the energy to feed and nurture the baby. I feel there is something complete in that cycle. Ultimately the job of the placenta is protective for mother and baby."

Breastfeeding

Producing too little breast milk is a worrisome ordeal to say the least. A study conducted by The First Obstetric Clinic of Charles University, Prague, found that placenta capsules have a positive effect on [breast milk production](#). They reported 86.2% of women that were struggling with nursing had an obvious increase in milk production after ingesting their own encapsulated placenta.

In February 2013, Daniel Benyshek, a University of Nevada medical anthropologist, and Sharon Young, a doctoral student of anthropology, conducted a survey on 189 women who consumed their placentas after childbirth. The survey found 76% of participants said they had very positive experiences. The common benefits reported included better mood, increased lactation and absence of post-partum depression.

Increase Energy

Every new mother values even the slightest increase in energy levels. Placenta encapsulation gives you the extra energy you need to take care of yourself and your baby when you need it the most!

The boost in energy many moms experience from placenta encapsulation is a mixture of the massive hormone boost and the richness of iron from the placenta. **Iron** stores are replenished to prevent anemia, a common postpartum condition. It increases energy levels, and helps prevent fatigue and depression. The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that less than 25% of women start pregnancy with iron stores sufficient enough for the demand of growing a baby. After giving birth, iron levels drop even further. Studies show even for non-anemic women, iron supplementation can help with fatigue. Although most iron supplements don't come in a bioavailable format like the iron from one's placenta.

Mothers who didn't experience placenta encapsulation with their first children express the dramatic difference it made with their last baby, to the extent that some have reported to have more energy than the father, even with extra children to look after!

Infant Growth

In fact this is not a new concept. Research was conducted at Harvard in 1918 by Frederick Hammet, which demonstrated that the rate of growth of infants was enhanced when their mothers ingested desiccated placenta.

Hormonal Balance

During pregnancy your placenta takes over hormone production from the ovaries, shooting ones levels of baby growing and happy hormones sky-high. The problem comes in soon after birth when the oxytocin spike starts to wear off. This is often when the baby blues set in. If the ovaries do not resume their job and get those mood and milk production hormones pumping fast, one can easily plummet into post-natal depression. By encapsulating the placenta one has a steady supply of necessary hormones to help you heal and gracefully adjust to motherhood.

Estrogen, Progesterone and Testosterone presented in the ratio found in your own placenta, are essential in stabilizing one's mood and preventing depression. They contribute to mammary gland development in preparation for lactation, as well as regulating post-birth uterine cramping. They also normalize libido, which can commonly disappear for 6 months or so post birth.

Prolactin is essential to activate and promote the milk supply. It also relaxes the mother and baby as well as enhancing the mothering instinct.

Oxytocin is the loving and bonding hormone deepening the bond between mother and child and interestingly between mother and father. After a biological birth the mother experiences the largest surge of oxytocin of her entire life. The placenta is extremely high in oxytocin, which has a large part to play in preventing PND. Oxytocin also helps to decrease pain and reduce stress as it is the antagonist to the stress hormone cortisol. It also greatly reduces postpartum bleeding and enhances the breastfeeding let-down reflex.

Thyroid Stimulating Hormone helps regulate the thyroid gland, balancing one's metabolism and mood and boosting energy levels. It also helps one to recover from stressful experiences.

Corticotropin Releasing Hormone (CRH) has been found to prevent depressive episodes. Low levels of CRH are implicated in postpartum depression.

Cortisone reduces inflammation within the tissue, as well as promoting healing.

Interferon is a hormone that supports the immune system in fighting infections.

Placental Opioid-Enhancing Factor (POEF) is known to stimulate the production of your body's natural opioids, including endorphins, which help to reduce pain and increase wellbeing.

Prostaglandins are necessary to regulate contractions in the uterus needed for it to return to normal size after birth. Plus it is a natural anti-inflammatory.

Hemoglobin carries oxygen into the cells, which increases energy levels.

Urokinase Inhibiting Factor and Factor 8 stops uterine bleeding and enhances wound

healing.

Immunoglobulin G (IgG) is an antibody, which supports the immune system.

Human Placental Lactogen (hPL) has lactogenic and growth-promoting properties, which helps mammary gland growth in preparation for lactation. It also regulates maternal glucose, protein, and fat levels.

It seems that our body can naturally create the perfect package to support a new mother during those first delicate weeks. To find out more about placenta encapsulation you can simply contact the private midwives or doulas in your area. Today this practice is fast becoming a normal part of the birth journey.