

Postpartum anxiety is a common postpartum ailment that has been shown to affect 18% of postpartum women<sup>1</sup>. With Symptoms that present similar but unique to Postpartum depression, postpartum anxiety can be both emotional and physical.

Symptoms of Postpartum anxiety include:<sup>2</sup>

- Constant or near constant worry
- Feelings of dread or fear that something will happen
- Racing thoughts
- Insomnia
- Fatigue
- Heart Racing
- Hyperventilation
- Nausea/vomiting
- Trembling/shaking

Low iron or Anemia may be an underlying cause of anxiety. Studies have shown the importance of adequate iron levels on emotional well being and other hormones and functions of the body<sup>3</sup>. The Postpartum period may lead to low iron for a variety of reasons including blood loss during delivery, inherited hemoglobin disorders, preexisting low iron and others causes<sup>4</sup>. Another common contributing factor to postpartum anxiety symptoms is lack of sleep / insomnia<sup>5</sup>. For many reasons a new parent may not be getting adequate rest including up tending through the night to the new baby.

PostPartum Anxiety can be eased by herbal medicine in a variety of formats. Using topical salves to promote restful sleep and relaxation, calming baths, teas and tinctures are some of the applications that can be used<sup>7</sup>.

Herbs to help ease and reduce anxiety symptoms- Lemon Balm (*Melissa Officinalis*)  
Hibiscus Flower (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*) Motherwort (*Leonurus cardiaca*) Lavender  
(*Lavandula angustifolia*) Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) <sup>7</sup>

If low iron is present using herbs to increase iron levels and build adequate blood levels is a way to ease postpartum anxiety.

Herbs for increasing iron: Yellow dock (*Rumex crispus*), Nettles (*Urtica dioica*), Red Raspberry leaf (*Rubus idaeus*), Dandelion root and leaf (*Taraxacum officinale*)  
shepherd's purse (*Capsella bursa-pastoris*)

Increasing Vitamin C intake with iron rich foods and herbs will assist in iron Absorption<sup>6</sup>. Citrus fruits, rosehips, berries and peppers are some examples of vitamin C rich foods

Some Herbs that can be helpful in easing anxiety while promoting sleep and fighting insomnia- Catnip (*Nepeta cataria*), Lemonbalm (*Melissa officinalis*), Chamomile (*Anthemis nobilis* and *Matricaria chamomilla*), Lavender (*Lavendula officinalis*), motherwort(*Leonurus cardiaca*),skulcap (*Scutellaria lateriflora*) Passionflower (*Bacopa Monnieri*)

Relaxing Bedtime Bath Recipe:

¼ Cup Chamomile flowers (*Anthemis nobilis* or *Matricaria chamomilla*)

2 Tbs Lavender (*Lavendula officinalis*) flowers

6 drops Sandalwood (*santalum album*)Essential oil

Put dried flowers to a Re-useable tea/bath/poultice bag and place in a bathtub of warm water, add Sandalwood EO, soak for 20 Mins before bed.

Anxiety is a common postpartum ailment that can negatively impact quality of life. There are many herbal preparation options to assist in soothing and treating postpartum anxiety. In addition to herbal preparations, getting adequate rest and sleep and consuming a wellbalanced diet while reducing stress is beneficial.

Always discuss health concerns openly with your health care practitioner including your symptoms, concerns, medications or supplements you are taking and if you are breastfeeding.

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- 1) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24160774>
- 2) <https://www.healthline.com/health/pregnancy/postpartum-anxiety#symptoms>
- 3) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4253901/>
- 4) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK379991/> Paragraph one
- 5) <https://adaa.org/understanding-anxiety/related-illnesses/sleep-disorders>
- 6) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/3700141>
- 7) Herbals for Children and Advanced Master clinical Herbalist. Demetria Clark, Heart of Herbs Herbal School [www.heartofherbs.com](http://www.heartofherbs.com)

