



10 Tips for Women Who Want To Be Healthy with Options (Baby Or Not!)

Start Early!

- 1. Teach girls at a young age how to take care of their health, their bodies and their worth.** A lot of how we think and what we do as adult women starts from when we were girls. Good health habits are essential training. Understanding self-worth helps to keep these very important practices in place.
- 2. Track each menstrual cycle.** Use an app, electronic or paper calendar to track your period. Not only does this help you to have a closer relationship with your body and health, it can help to understand the important patterns of the body and alert you to any important reproductive health changes.
- 3. Be conscious about what you put in your body.** From a traditional Asian medicine standpoint, we as women are yin, like the yin and yang symbol. Yin means many things, one of which is being receptive. As women, special consideration must be paid to what we put in our bodies. This includes foods (which should be whole and organic as much as possible), but also things that have direct contact with the vaginal ecosystem like the type of menstrual hygiene product and birth control used. It is also important to make aware choices regarding things that can affect hormones, including products with BPA and chemicals.

Baby or Not

- 4. Be clear about what your stressors are and have regular relaxation time.** Stress can play huge havoc on mind and body. Many women are dealing not only with the day to day challenges of living in capitalism, but also with unrealistic expectations to be the best in their professional life, but at the same that they should be a mother, have the perfect family life, and or fit a size clothes and the list goes on and on. Having a good regular, relaxation regimen is key in keeping unhelpful pressure and its negative effects at bay.
- 5. Have a competent well-rounded health team that you have good relationships with.** Well-rounded meaning both “traditional western” and alternative natural therapies. Many people seem to gravitate one way or the other, but both approaches have their place, and each can be helpful in its own rite to address the varied and complex needs of us multi-dimensional humans.
- 6. Stay informed** about your body, track changes and be proactive. Attend regular health visits with your practitioners and keep all follow-up appointments in a timely manner. Note any changes in your body and get the information and assistance that you need.
- 7. Consider acupuncture.** Acupuncture is the placement of hair thin needles into specific locations of the body. It is part of the complete healing system of Traditional Chinese/Asian

Medicine, which has been used to effectively address health concerns for thousands of years. In addition to helping the body reach a deep state of relaxation, it can be helpful with numerous health ailments including PMS, head and body pains, dysmenorrhea, hypo/hypertension, digestive difficulties, depression and other emotional conditions.

After the Baby

- 8. Understand that there is such thing as postnatal depletion.** The postnatal time, i.e. the time after a woman has a baby is very important, not only for the health of the baby, but for the mother as well. There are many myths surrounding this period that can prove to be detrimental to maternal health. One of which is if the mother is not feeling well sometime after having a baby, then it is postpartum depression. While postpartum depression exists, so does postnatal depletion (a condition where the mother is deficient in key nutrients and health factors. This can happen post any type of labor and may be further complicated by the type of birth, loss of blood, etc. that can happen. Adequate support nutritionally and community wise are some of the essential keys for the full healing, optimal functioning and short and long-term health of the mother.
 - 9. Have a plan for after you have a baby.** Many baby stores will give a list of all the things that your baby needs. In that same fashion it's good to have a list of the basics that's needed for the mother and household to function after having a new little one. It can be helpful, particularly after such a huge life change, to have some staples in place. This plan can include whom can bring by food, or who is available to run errands, etc. A template for such plan is available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y7uxhuul>.
 - 10. Have lots of support.** If it takes a village to raise a child, then it takes at least a small one to help the one that incubated it. It can be a big challenge in nuclear-based societies for this to happen, but it is still essential. Call in the help of family members, friends and doulas to help fill in the gaps, so that the mother is not spread thin and is thus more able to fully support her baby and family, have better health and more peace.
- *BONUS!** Understand and put into practice that just because you can doesn't mean you should. Many women from the beginning are taught to be good servants. We also learn wonderful skills including multitasking, flexibility and putting others first. While these are beautiful traits and has allowed for so many wonderful things to happen in the world, if unchecked it can become dangerous, particularly if self-care is sub-par and there is a huge commitment like a baby, young child, demanding work, etc. Balance flexibility with limits and remember to fill your own cup first!