



COPING WITH COVID



Perinatal support newsletter

You're not in this alone, we're in this together and we're here to help



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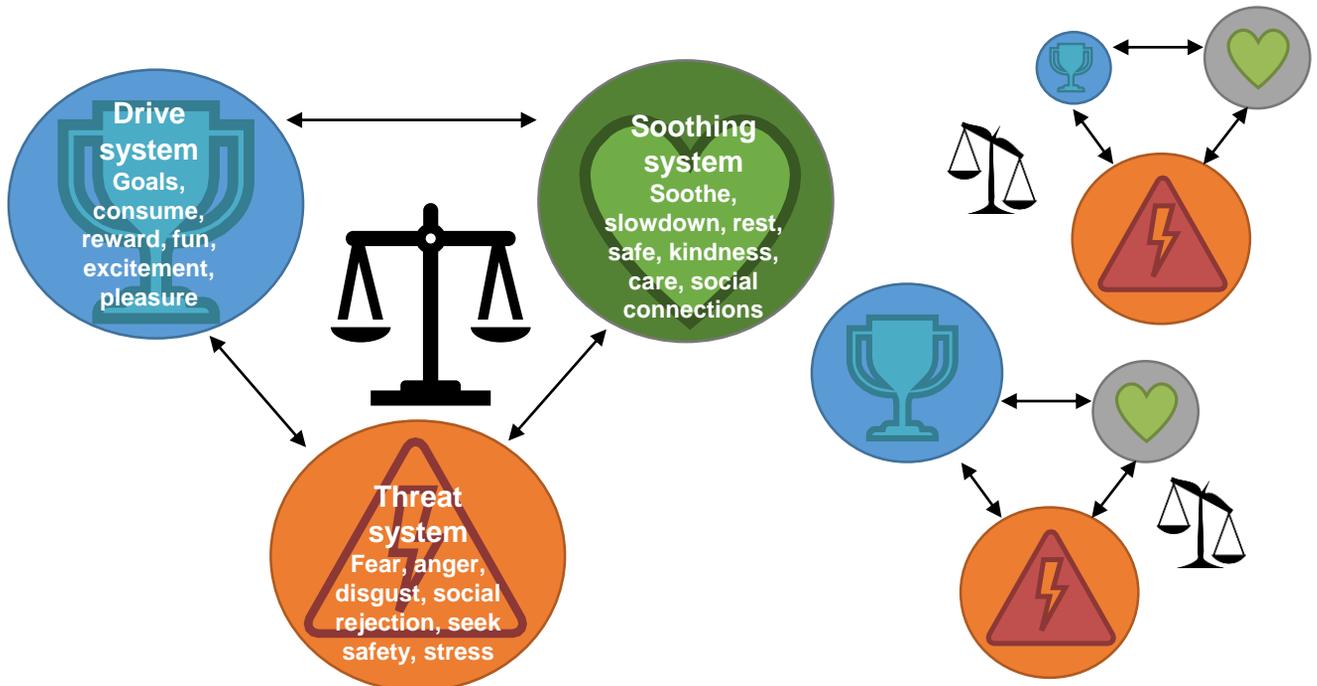
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July 2021 - August 2021

Welcome to the Summer Issue of our Coping with COVID-19 Perinatal Newsletter. This month we will be focusing on compassionate approach to yourself after lockdown, how to keep children safe from heath, the importance of play, breath taking stories from mothers and other exciting topics.

Compassionate Approach to coming out of lockdown

There are three systems in our brain that help us manage our emotions. We all have a **threat system** that responds to perceived stressors, a **drive system** that motivates us to do fun or rewarding activities and a **soothe system** that helps us feel safe and soothed. These systems are all of equal importance so we need to strive for these systems to be balanced, however even under normal circumstances, we know that for a lot of people the threat and drive systems can be overactive whilst the soothe system can be hard to activate. This imbalance in the three systems is likely to be even bigger as we come out of lockdown, as doing things you haven't done in a while can be overwhelming, and uncertainty about covid-19 may cause even more concern.



There are a lot of things that you can do to **rebalance** these systems - check out our top tips on the next page.

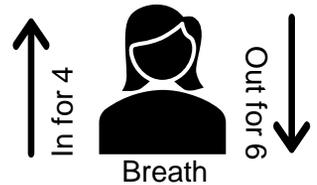
Tips on how to rebalance your emotion systems over lockdown

Remind yourself:

- 1 You might be feeling a huge range of feelings, e.g. stress, fear, anxiety, relief, hope. They might come in waves or all at the same time; this is normal. These feelings are normal and important, and although they might feel horrible, they will pass.
- 2 The increased intensity of emotions that you might be feeling in the context of coming out of lockdown is a normal human response to extreme and abnormal circumstances

Things you can do when you are feeling overwhelmed:

- **Simple body scan:** Use your senses (things you can see, hear, smell, touch and taste) to help focus your attention and ground yourself in the here and now when you notice yourself becoming overwhelmed with thoughts or feelings.
- **Soothing breathing:** Practice some slow deep breathing to help deactivate your body's internal alarm system, making sure your out breath is longer than your in breath.
- Reach out to **friends** and **family**, either to talk to about how you're feeling or to just spend time with.
- Ask your allocated perinatal mental health worker to consider a referral for **psychology therapy** if this is something you would like to consider.



Go at your own pace

Don't feel like you have to rush and plan to do everything, this can make things feel very overwhelming. Take things one step at a time; do what is comfortable and feels safe.

But do not avoid doing things entirely

Avoiding may feel like it's reducing the anxiety but it can make it harder to face your fears in the long term. Instead, set yourself manageable targets like meeting one person for coffee and gradually build up from there.

Make time to relax and rest

Being able to see more of our friends and family, and visit places that might have been closed until now, is exciting. But it can also be a lot to take in all at once, so it's important to find regular time for yourself to relax too.

Every Mind Matters, NHS, have also identified 11 different ways of dealing with anxiety about coming out of lockdown. For more tips go to www.nhs.uk and searching for: 'How to cope with anxiety about lockdown lifting - Every Mind Matters - NHS'.

Blog post by Dr Chrissy Jayarajah

“Mummy Cant Breath”

Hi all - it's been a long time - I wrote this over a year ago, and it has been sitting in my drafts gathering virtual dust. At the time it was incomprehensible that the coronavirus would continue to cause chaos in our lives. I'm sharing this because the story might resonate with someone, but also because I think it is time and a story that needs to be told. On my first mothers day I woke up in the morning unable to breathe. After almost of week of feeling poorly with a cough and on/off high temperatures (? spiked by watching the news) I was sitting with my 9 month old baby singing nursery rhymes, and I couldn't get past the "Old" of Old McDonald had a farm without gasping for air. You don't need to be a medic to know that this state of breathlessness is not normal, so, reluctantly, I called 999. As I gave my name and address, I profusely apologised for "wasting their time" and, whilst struggling to speak still managed to say

"I'm (gasp) sure (gasp) its (gasp) nothing".

A couple of hours later I was being blue lighted through the empty inner London streets in the back of an ambulance with a Respiratory Rate of 44, Temperature of 39.6 degrees Celsius, and an oxygen saturation around 85% - worse than a lifelong chain smoker (for the record, something I am not). When the ambulance crew arrived it was plain to see I was seriously ill - yet even with all my years of training and expertise I refused to go to hospital, because I refused to leave my baby. She needs me, I kept saying. We had not been even an hour apart since the moment she was born. Shes breastfeeding. "I can't leave her" I gasped, over and over again. To this day I'm very thankful to the paramedic, whose name I cannot remember whom casually said "hey I tell you what - just come with us, let us check you out in A&E, make sure everything is OK and you will be back home in a few hours". Obviously that was a lie, but one of those little white lies that saves lives that sometimes we have to do.

The next 4 days was a blur. I was placed in "isolation" - alone in a large magnolia coloured room with a small window that faced a red wall. Nurses came to check on me regularly, albeit from a distance covered head to toe in personal protective equipment. I was placed on oxygen therapy and given antibiotics. I was in such a septic rush that I didn't pack anything in my hospital bag but some old pyjamas, a gym t-shirt (?), a small bottle of holy water from my mother that I've always carried with me whenever I travel, and a portable phone charger which was only 10% charged itself. I used my phone sporadically, only to face-time my daughter for a few seconds at a time before her naps. I didn't pack a breast pump, the thought hadn't even crossed my mind - until a few hours later when I was struggling with engorgement and doing my best to hand express into a kidney dish through the night to stop myself getting mastitis on top of everything else.

A few days later with improved oxygen saturations I was allowed to leave hospital as I was mostly better (on retrospect not fully recovered by any means - but I think they gave me the benefit of the doubt being a "sensible" doctor, whatever that means...) I was told a few times that I should stop breastfeeding and be separated from my baby for a number of reasons - "coronavirus could be in the breast milk", "you could harm your baby", "you could infect her", "the antibiotics might not safe", and possibly the most patronising "well you have had a good run", all of these claims totally false and founded in fear rather than facts, and although I knew it was false with my clinical expertise I was too weak to argue with them at the time so chose to save my (much needed) breath.

As soon as I came home, I gave my daughter a huge hug and she went straight back on the breast like nothing had ever happened. Since then so much evidence has come out about the benefits of breastfeeding and its immuno-protective qualities - something that needs to be shared more and one of the reasons I have chosen to share my own dual patient and professional experience. I have also written to our government and with organisations behind the scenes to support the often neglected needs of breastfeeding women admitted to hospital and separated from their children, both on a practical and emotional level.

It took some time to recover, but I am thankful to say that from a physical perspective I am back to normal and honestly it is a wonderful feeling to not only be alive, but to be able to breathe, talk and sing with ease again. Being unable to breathe is so anxiety-provoking, not surprising as the breathing control centre, stress and anxiety are intricately linked by the vagus nerve. Deprivation of the breath of life also conjures images of death - since writing this original article, the world witnessed the tragic murder of George Floyd in 2020, repeatedly stating "I can't breathe" to his oppressors, igniting the black lives matter movement for the next generation.

Psychologically speaking, I also feel very well and grounded - but even the process of writing this has raised a lot of questions for me; how mothers/daughters/women in caring roles default to "putting others needs before their own", and how the line between doctors and patients is truly blurred in times of sickness and health. These questions are something I explore a lot with my patients, so pertinent in the perinatal period, but maybe we can talk about that another time.

I'm thankful to my husband whom looked after our infant alone in lockdown without any support from family or friends during that first (of many) lockdowns.

I'm thankful to the lady on the end of that breathless 999 call who told me to take care of myself.

I'm thankful to that paramedic that told me a white lie.

I'm even thankful to the junior doctors whom did countless arterial blood gases on me (with and without local anaesthetic). I had to make a split second decision about coming into hospital, and I'm thankful I made the right one.

.. and even though its taken me over a year to gain the courage to do so - I'm thankful I am able to share my story.



Traditional Chinese pregnancy and childbirth practices

Chinese people have their own health beliefs and practices, mainly based on the fact that food, illness, and medications are usually classified as ‘hot’ or ‘cold’ according to the perceived effects on the body. Health is believed to be a balance of positive (yang) and negative (yin) energy in the body. This is no different when talking about pregnancy and childbirth.

Yin and Yang

is a premise that underlines all Chinese philosophy and is just as prevalent in the post-birth recovery traditions as it is in [Chinese medicine](#), [food choices](#) and even what temperature water you should drink.

The basic principle is that your Yin and Yang must be balanced in every aspect of your life.

As soon as the two fall out of balance, you are more prone to [illness and disease](#).

Many foods, medications and illnesses fall into the categories and can be counteracted by increasing the opposite energy.

When blood is lost through childbirth, the body falls into yin (coldness). A new mother will need to increase her yang to restore balance to her body.

This is heavily reflected in the Chinese pregnancy rules – a good example is the dish pork knuckles mixed with ginger and black vinegar.

The pork helps with calcium levels, the ginger removes wind [from the body](#) and the meaty broth provide hydration and nutrients.

Every ingredient helps to remove or undo an imbalance.

*If you have any knowledge or experience about pregnancy and/or motherhood in a particular culture, please get in touch with the team via our email: ssg-tr.perinatalswstg@nhs.net.

Doing the Month

For thousands of years, new mothers have taken part in the Chinese pregnancy tradition of **坐月子** (zuò yuè zi), translated as ‘doing the month’ or ‘sitting in’.

This act is also known as ‘*postnatal confinement*’ and is documented as early as the first century, recorded in the **Book of Rites** – one of the foundational classics of Chinese tradition – from the Zhou dynasty. *“Post-natal confinement” is simply the first 30-40 days after birth where the mother does not leave home, entertain visitors or shower.*

Most new mothers will be cared for by their own mothers or mother-in-law’s, who will either visit daily or move in for the time period.

The traditional belief stems from an understanding that both the mother and baby have low immunity and need to be protected and nursed back to full health.

During this period of isolation, specific food and drinks are regularly prepared for the mother to help rebuild her body, shrink her uterus and encourage lactation.

This confinement period can also be referred to as the *“fourth trimester”* as it’s a crucial period of time for the new-born to adjust to life in the world and the mother to recover.

Post-natal confinement rules

Post-natal confinement rules vary and typically each family will decide individually how to follow them. Family members, especially mothers and mothers-in-law will advise from their own experiences and knowledge, passing down wisdom that will be further shared down the line in the future. *The listed rules are more of a ‘guideline’.*

The primary principle is to **avoid catching a chill to prevent illnesses later** on including joint problems, whilst resting, sleeping, feeding the new-born baby and eating only. Rules commonly include:

- ❖ Avoid cold drinks, coffee or any water that isn’t tepid or hot
- ❖ Do not shower or wash hair
- ❖ Do not leave the house and minimise activity and exercise
- ❖ Avoid raw fruit and vegetables, keep food bland and unflavoured
- ❖ Avoid wind (fans / air conditioning / opening windows)
- ❖ Do not climb stairs
- ❖ Do not have sexual relations
- ❖ Do not cry

After the birth of my son, I suffered from postnatal depression – local mental health support saved my life



Suhana Ahmed

Those first few weeks and months of motherhood took such a toll on my mental health. I spent hours on the internet scouring adoption sites



Around 16,000 new mums missed out on vital mental health support because of the pandemic. (*Alamy/PA*) →

After the birth of my son, I suffered from postnatal depression – local mental health support saved my life

It's difficult to pinpoint exactly when the exhaustion and the normal struggles of being a first-time mother evolved into the [postnatal depression](#) that would darken my first years of [motherhood](#). An episode of depression earlier in life put me at a much higher risk, but even my years training as a psychiatrist couldn't prepare me for the extent and severity of my illness.

Labour happened three weeks earlier than expected. A catalogue of failures followed, all of which I believed to be my fault: a prolonged labour, C-section, a special care baby unit, and an inability to breastfeed, to name a few. I was physically, emotionally, and mentally exhausted, and totally unprepared.

Those first few weeks and months took such a toll on my [mental health](#). I spent hours on the internet scouring adoption sites in a bid to give my son the better life I thought he deserved. In between night-time feeds I would be consumed with dark thoughts about the end of my life. I wrote letters to those I'd be leaving behind, including my new-born boy. Thankfully, none of that came to pass as I was given the support to make a recovery and to give my son the love and care he needed.

I was seen urgently by a psychiatrist who gave me a glimmer of hope amongst the darkness that enveloped me. I had no hope of my own, but his was apparent and able to pierce the smallest hole in my

dark, lonely bubble. I was then admitted to a mother and baby unit with my son for three weeks.

By the start of my second week, the cloud started to lift. I ventured out of my room to take my little boy into the garden on the sunny days and watch him smile, oblivious to my situation. I became more aware of the very unwell women around me, some of whom, like me, had postnatal depression, and others of whom were living with postpartum psychosis or other conditions. Over those three weeks in the unit, I began feeling like a mother and by the end was desperate to be discharged. A combination of medication, treatment, and the love and support shown by the nurses helped me begin to see that I was not a bad person. My son became someone I looked forward to seeing, not something that filled me with dread, fear, and worry.

The next year or so was hard and brought different challenges. I had to learn to interact with my son, to smile with him, to meet his emotional needs – all while being wracked with the unbearable knowledge that I had failed to do exactly this in the first six months. But cognitive behaviour therapy has played a significant role in my longer-term recovery and enables me to enjoy motherhood and enjoy special times and moments with my son.

Imagine my surprise and disappointment when I learnt recently that around 16,000 new mums missed out on vital mental health support because of the pandemic. Many of them would have been living with the exact same thoughts and feelings as I was but were unable to access the help they needed. It's so important that access to perinatal services is improved and investment is secured because these mums wouldn't have missed out on the care and support they needed. Another concern from the analysis by the Royal College of Psychiatrists' Mental Health Watch is the huge variation between local areas, meaning new mums are being subjected to an unfair "postcode lottery".

I wouldn't have been here to watch my son grow were it not for the mother and baby unit and the community support I received. There wouldn't be the joy filled moments shared with me, my son and our family. This happy ending shouldn't be reserved for those mums fortunate enough to live in those areas with better access to perinatal mental health services. The government and local health bosses must do more, so that every mum in every part of the country can access support, should they need it.

How can I keep my baby safe during hot weather?

Babies and young children can become ill during very hot weather. Their health can be seriously affected by:

- ❖ [dehydration](#)
- ❖ [heat exhaustion and heatstroke](#)
- ❖ [sunburn](#)

Try these tips for keeping your child happy and healthy in the heat:

Sun safety

Keep your baby cool and protect them from the sun.

- Babies less than 6 months old should be kept out of direct sunlight. Their skin contains too little melanin, which is the pigment that gives skin, hair and eyes their colour, and provides some protection from the sun.
- Older babies should also be kept out of the sun as much as possible, particularly in the summer and between 11am and 3pm, when the sun is at its strongest. If you go out when it's hot, attach a parasol or sunshade to your baby's pushchair to keep them out of direct sunlight.
- Apply a sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30 to your baby's skin. Make sure the product also protects against both UVA and UVB rays. Many brands produce sunscreen specifically for babies and young children, as these products are less likely to contain additives that might irritate the skin. Apply the sun cream regularly, particularly if your child is in and out of the sea or paddling pool.
- Make sure your child wears a sunhat with a wide brim or a long flap at the back to protect their head and neck from the sun.

Avoid dehydration

Like adults, babies and young children need to drink plenty of fluids to avoid becoming dehydrated.

From 0 to 6 months

- Fully breastfed babies do not need any water until they've started eating solid foods. During hot weather they may want to breastfeed more than usual.
- If you're bottle feeding, as well as their usual milk feeds, you can give your baby a little cooled boiled water. If your baby wakes at night, they'll probably want milk. If they have had their usual milk feeds, try cooled boiled water as well.
- Remember you can ask your health visitor or another health professional for advice about any baby care issue, advice will then be tailored to meet your baby's needs.

From around 6 months

- Once you have started to introduce solid foods, you should offer your baby sips of water from a cup or beaker with meals. Remember that breastmilk or infant formula should be their main drinks during the first year. In hot weather, you may need to offer some additional water outside of mealtimes.

From 12 months

- Water, breast milk or whole cows' milk should be your baby's main drinks. In hot weather, you can try giving them frozen lollies made from plain water or from very diluted fruit juice to help keep them hydrated. Lollies made from diluted fruit juice should only be given at mealtimes because they can cause tooth decay.
- For older children, give them plenty of fruit and salad to help keep their fluid levels up. Remember that undiluted fruit juice or smoothies should not be given to children until they are 5 years old.

Read more about [drinks and cups for babies and young children](#).



How can I keep my baby safe during hot weather?

Keeping cool

Follow the tips below to help keep your children cool and safe during hot weather.

- Playing in a paddling pool is a good way of keeping babies and children cool. Keep the pool in the shade during very hot weather and supervise the children carefully at all times.
- Run them a cool bath before bedtime.
- Keep your child's bedroom cool during the day by closing blinds or curtains. You can also use a fan to circulate the air in the room.
- Keep nightwear and bedclothes to a minimum. If your baby kicks or pushes off the covers during the night, consider putting them in just a nappy with a single well-secured sheet that will not work loose and cover their face or get entangled during the night.
- A nursery thermometer will help you monitor the temperature of your baby's room. Your baby will sleep most comfortably when their room is between 16C and 20C.



Further information:

[Dehydration](#)

[Heat exhaustion and heatstroke](#)

[Sunburn](#)

[Child safety in the sun](#)

[Summer health](#)

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World Breastfeeding Week

August 1st - August 7th

World Breastfeeding Week is an event run annually from 1st to 7th August by World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action, alongside UNICEF and the World Health Organization. It provides an opportunity to raise global awareness on the many benefits of breastfeeding to the health and well-being of babies and their mothers, as well as highlight the importance of supporting mothers to breastfeed for as long as they wish.

World Breastfeeding Week recognises that there are increasingly many different demands placed on mothers, which can mean that mothers who may want to breastfeed their babies haven't always got the support to continue to do so or that don't always feel that breastfeeding their child is something that is an accessible option to them. This year, the event will focus on how breastfeeding contributes to the survival, health and wellbeing of all, and the importance of protecting breastfeeding worldwide.

What are some of the ways to get involved and celebrate World Breastfeeding Week 2021?

- Take part in the 'global big virtual latch on 2021' which is taking place on 6th, 7th and 8th August this year. This is an opportunity for friends, family and community to gather to breastfeed and offer support to one another. The Big Latch On aims to remove the stigma around breastfeeding, raise awareness of the benefits of breast milk, and provide a place for mother to build a lasting support community and network. Learn more about The Big Latch On and sign up for a virtual gathering on: <https://biglatchon.org/big-latch-on/>
- Breastfeeding is a rewarding experience, but it can be physically and emotionally demanding too! Therefore, it is important to make time for self-care. It could be finding some quiet time to reflect and relax, getting some fresh air and take a walk or taking a hot bath or shower.

Infant Mental Health Awareness Week

Last month the perinatal mental health service put together a range of online webinars for Infant Mental Health Awareness week, including talks on infant brain developing, the magic of story telling, infant feeding and infant play. The week provided an opportunity for everyone working in the health sector to raise awareness of the importance of babies' social and emotional development, and to share work they are doing. This years the theme was 'including infants in children and young people's mental health'. Young people's mental health focuses too often on older children, and there is what is called a 'baby blind spot', where children ages 0-18 often get forgotten about. It is important for everyone to consider and talk about infant, children and young people's mental health. To access the webinars, visit the Perinatal Mental Health Service's Youtube channel:



#IMHAW21

7-13 June 2021



INFANT
MENTAL HEALTH
AWARENESS WEEK

7-13 June 2021

Feedback from the Circle of Security Parenting Group

Circle of Security Parenting is an 8-week group that focuses on understanding babies' emotional worlds and how to support their ability to manage emotions, with the aim of learning about and understanding what's needed for a secure parent-child relationship. We plan to run the next group in **September 2021**. If you are interested in this group, please inform your health care professional from the Perinatal Team or call us on 0203 513 6577.

I really enjoyed the content of the sessions and found it really helpful as there were lots of new concepts pitched at the right level. It has benefited my parenting and is something that I will take forward with me. I quite enjoyed having something to tease my brain to focus on and to learn, and to do something that was outside the mundane parenting tasks like changing nappies and feeding. I enjoyed the regular routine having some thing to do in the day. I enjoyed the social aspect of it, it was great meeting the other mums and the facilitators. I encourage people who are considering doing the group to do it, don't be afraid to participate and ask questions and just go for it!

I really enjoyed meeting other mums, and looking at things from a different perspective has helped me feel more confident about my parenting going forward. It is well worth it; those 8 weeks go so quickly and I am rally going to miss it.

I definitely took a lot away from doing the group. It has helped me to understand some of my behavior and my babies behavior, and for me that was something that I needed. I really enjoyed the learning part of it and it broke up my day from just being all about looking after my baby.

Updates

Covid-19 government updates

Prime Minister Boris Johnson has said people in England are "very likely" to be able to return to "pretty much life before Covid" on 19 July.

The final stage was put back by four weeks from 21 June, because of the spread of the Delta variant. The government said more time was needed to vaccinate the adult population.

The remaining restrictions include the rule of six, table service in pubs and restaurants, nightclubs being closed and capacity limits in theatres and cinemas.

National Schizophrenia Awareness Day

This is an annual event that takes place on **25th July** and is run by the charity Rethink Mental Illness. This provides an opportunity to raise awareness about the difficult challenges faced by people living with schizophrenia both in the UK and worldwide. It aims to break the stigma and discrimination that often surrounds this misunderstood mental health condition. The day is dedicated to recognising the continuing effort and support, to improve the quality of life for people living with schizophrenia and their families.

Acai Bowl

What is an Acai Bowl?

Originating in Brazil, the acai bowl is made of frozen acai palm fruit that is pureed and served as a smoothie in a bowl or glass. In Brazil, acai bowls are typically topped with **granola, banana, and guaraná syrup**. Several other variations, however, can be found throughout the country, including acai bowls topped with tapioca balls and a **saltier version that is topped with shrimp or dried fish**.



Acai Bowl Ingredients

Frozen blueberries and strawberries – fortunately, acai tastes great with just about any fruit. That said, it tastes particularly wonderful with frozen berries. Any mixture of blueberries, strawberries, or blackberries would be the top pick.

Banana – Ideally frozen, bananas are naturally super sweet and super creamy (not to mention loaded with potassium!)

Liquid – Yes, you will need some kind of liquid to get things moving along. I added milk for the extra protein boost, but feel free to add your favorite fruit juice.

Yogurt – I understand that yogurt may not be for everyone, so feel free to leave it out and substitute with additional milk or juice if preferred. *However*, if you are team yogurt, do it. So much creaminess. That said, please **PLEASE do not add a flavored yogurt**. You will completely mask the delicious, natural flavor of the acai.

Acai Bowl Toppings: Granola, Seeds, Nuts, Fresh sliced fruit.

How to make an Acai Bowl

Make this Acai Bowl in three easy steps, **Freeze your fruit**. Slice your banana and transfer it to a small baking sheet or plate lined with parchment paper. To the same plate, add the blueberries and strawberries (store-bought frozen fruit will work just as well). Transfer tray or plate to the freezer and allow the fruit to freeze completely.

Blend. Once frozen, add the milk and yogurt to the bowl of a large, [high-speed blender with a tamper](#) (see tips and tricks). Add the frozen blueberries, strawberries, banana, and broken up acai. With the blender on low, use the tamper to push the frozen fruit down, mixing around as much as possible. Continue to blend on low until smooth, only adding additional liquid when needed.

Assemble. Divide the smoothie into two bowls and top with all your favorite toppings. Best enjoyed immediately (because it will melt).

Recipe taken from: [Acai Bowl Recipe - How to Make Your Own Acai Bowl - The Forked Spoon](#)

A word from the midwife Hellen

Lombardo von Winckler ...

Every pregnancy is like a long and laborious journey, planned or not, solo or accompanied. And, like it happens when we are travelling abroad for holidays, (Or, I should say, when we used to be able to plan those escapes to the continent... good old times!) we can face all sorts of mishaps in the way. Missing a flight, losing the passport! Getting sick after trying that delicious street food... All these setbacks can be quite upsetting and turn what should be a lovely experience into something dreadful and sometimes even traumatic.

Of course, when we are talking about pregnancies, a travel holiday metaphor could sound like a light-spirited joke. Hyperemesis gravidarum, for example, is definitely not fun. While nausea and vomiting of pregnancy in general is estimated to occur in 50 to 90% of all pregnancies, **hyperemesis gravidarum** is estimated to occur in 0.5 to 2% of pregnant women. Turning the first, and sometimes part of the second trimester, into a very difficult experience. Especially for those trying to keep this new beginning a little more intimate and still absorbed in getting around that their lives are about to change a lot in the following months.

Other hardships can be found all the way, Gestational Diabetes -In the **UK**, approximately 16 out of every 100 pregnant women will develop **gestational diabetes**- with its diet restrictions and daily monitoring, not mentioning the worries about the delivery and the baby's health, could be someone's heartbreak. For others, it will be **Preeclampsia**, occurring in 5 to 8% of pregnancies, and bringing a sour taste to a moment of already high vulnerability and so many expectations.

Not disregarding other medical conditions which, in so many ways, can make the pregnancy experience different than expected. Different, not exactly worse or better. Expectations, plans, excitement are driving forces. They make us endure the hard bits and look forward to the goal. But they can also steal from us the little moments of joy we can only find during moments of fragility. The little things that we don't care much in our daily lives, but we start to cherish when we are abroad...in a foreign life or body.

And how happy we get when we come back home! And you will be back! With help, with some scars, souvenirs of the adventure, but we always come back home! Listening to the medical advices, following the care plan, speaking up when you feel lost, bringing your loved ones to get involved with your care... Those are all the ways to get back safe and sound.

I wish you a very good journey!



Some helpful links for perinatal mental health support or when in crisis

Peanut is a social networking app to meet, chat and learn from like-minded women.

<https://www.peanut-app.io>

Mush is an app where mothers can find friends who live nearby with kids the same age, arrange meetups, get advice from parenting experts and fellow mums <https://letsmush.com/the app/>

Slam Recovery College runs workshops and courses to provide the tools to help you become an expert in your own recovery or that of someone you care for

Association of Postnatal Illness <https://www.slamrecoverycollege.co.uk/>

London Perinatal Mental Health Support Group A safe space to discuss all things pregnancy, new parenthood and mental health-related. Led by an experienced and trained Peer Supporter from Cocoon Family Support <https://www.facebook.com/events/2816175805336313/>

The Breathing App guides you gently into resonance breathing, which is a breathing rate of 5-7 breaths per minute (instead of our usual 15-18) <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/the-breathing-app/id1285982210>

Headspace - A guided meditation app with the goal of mindfulness <https://www.headspace.com>

If you find yourself in a mental health crisis and you do not know who to turn to, South West London and St George's has a Mental Health Support Line for all of their clients which can advise and signpost you towards vital support. Their number is: **0800 028 8000**

Other Crisis Helplines:



text SHOUT to 85258. A free confidential 24hr text support service.



call 116 123. Open 24hrs a day, 365 days a year

If you have any feedback or need any further help with any of the information we have provided in this newsletter or wish to unsubscribe, please contact us.

Perinatal Office

Telephone: 0203 513 6577

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Twitter: @swlstgperinatal

[Feedback link about the service \(POEM\)](#)



South West London and
St George's Mental Health

NHS Trust