



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Anaemia.....	2
Low Blood Pressure (Hypotension)	3
High Blood Pressure (Hypertension).....	4
Carpal Tunnel Syndrome	6
Constipation.....	7
Heartburn	8
Insomnia	9
Labour Preparation & Pain Relief	10
Labour.....	11
Leg Cramps.....	12
Morning Sickness	13
Oedema	15
Symphysitis	16
Thrush (Candida)	17
Urinary Tract Infections	18
Varicose Veins & Haemorrhoids	19
Postnatal Care	20



NATURAL REMEDIES FOR ANAEMIA

Haemoglobin levels drops usually in the middle part of pregnancy due to the increased volume of blood. If it decreases to the point of causing tiredness, shortness of breath, paleness and lethargy, then treatment needs to be started.

Blood tests known as Hb or FBC (full blood count) is done early in the pregnancy, and again at 28 weeks and 36 weeks to determine the level and if extra iron is needed.

Here are some suggestions that might help:

- **Dietary changes:**
 - Eat iron rich foods: dark green leafy vegetables, red meat, offal, whole grains, dried fruits especially prunes, parsley, watercress, molasses, cocoa
 - Avoid tea, coffee, bran, as they prevent iron being absorbed
- **Supplements:**
 - Iron taken with Vitamin C but not Zinc
 - Floradix or Spatone natural iron
 - Pregnancy multivitamin supplement or iron infusion if low ferritin
- **Herbal remedies:** Nettle, peppermint, blackcurrant, yellow dock or parsley tea
- **Homeopathy:** Ferrum Phos, Ferrum Metallicum, Calc Phos, Nat Mur, China, Pulsatilla can be useful, or consult a homoeopath for more
- **Reflexology:** Stimulate (rub clockwise) liver, spleen and heart reflex points- for a few minutes each day
- **Aromatherapy:** Black pepper 3 drops in 10mls carrier oil for light massage in the last trimester

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1. Tiran, Denise and Mack. Sue, 1995 **Complementary therapies for Pregnancy and Childbirth** Bailliere Tindall London
2. Balaskas, Janet 1990 **Natural Pregnancy** Interlink Books New York
3. Enzer, Susanne 1997 **Maternity Reflexology** Born to be Free and Soul to Sole Reflexology
4. Kirshmann, Gayla J and John D 1996 **Nutrition Almanach** McGraw-Hill International Editions
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NATURAL REMEDIES FOR LOW BLOOD PRESSURE

Low blood pressure can occur in the first half of the pregnancy or throughout the pregnancy. Some signs of low blood pressure can be dizziness and fainting. These symptoms can also occur in anytime during the pregnancy, as the pregnancy hormones soften the vein walls and blood tends to be slower in reaching the brain. The temporary lack of oxygen causes the dizziness. It can be aggravated by sudden position changes, standing for a prolonged time, heat or after a hot shower.

Sometimes, dizziness or fainting can be caused by a sudden drop in sugar level (hypoglycaemia), which is associated with cold sweat and sometimes trembling.

Here are a few suggestions to possibly decrease the incidence of dizziness or fainting.

- **Lifestyle/ Dietary Changes:**
 - Contract and release legs and buttocks if standing for a while
 - Always have water with you and drink at least 8 glasses/day
 - Sit down, lower your head if you start feeling faint
 - Ginger in any form is a blood stimulant, carry some with you i.e., crystallized ginger, ginger beer
 - If caused by hypoglycaemia, adopt a diet rich in complex carbohydrates (rice, pasta, breads) rather than fast sugars (soft drinks, chocolate, jams, sweets)
- **Homeopathy**
 - 4 drops of Bach Flower Rescue remedy under the tongue when you feel faint
 - Consult a homeopath for constitutional remedy
- **Reflexology**
 - Stimulate (rub clockwise) kidney reflex, and spinal rub
 - Endocrine balance
- **Acupressure**
 - Apply pressure to the LU9 & HT7 simultaneously on the wrist for 5-7 seconds
 - Apply firm but gentle pressure on K1 on the foot for 10 seconds as required
- **Aromatherapy**
 - 2 drops of Rosemary, Eucalyptus or Peppermint oil on a tissue for dizziness
 - Lemon or grapefruit oil, 1-2 drops in a bath or footbath are useful too

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NATURAL REMEDIES FOR PREVENTION OF HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

Blood pressure is recorded regularly throughout pregnancy, as sometimes towards the end of the pregnancy it can rise. If the rise is accompanied with oedema (swelling of hands, face and feet) and protein in the urine, it is called pre-eclampsia and you will need medical treatment.

However, a good diet and lifestyle can help the blood pressure remain stable, as stress and junk food are a contributing factor in hypertension in general.

Here are some suggestions that may help:

- **Lifestyle changes**
 - Gentle exercise such as walking and swimming
 - Relaxation, hypnotherapy, yoga, massage help keep stress at bay
- **Dietary changes**
 - Eat plenty of garlic, avoid tea and coffee, drink dandelion tea
 - A diet rich in fruit and vegetables, and grains can be helpful especially potassium rich foods such as fish, bananas, potatoes, avocados, tomatoes
 - Magnesium rich foods such as cooked beans and peas, dark green leafy vegetables, milk, nuts, seafood
 - Calcium rich foods such as skim milk, spinach and broccoli
 - Celery and cucumber are mildly diuretic
 - 2 serves of deep-sea fish or fish oil a week (salmon, sardines, tuna, mackerel)
- **Reflexology**
 - Lymphatic technique with urinary flush
 - Sedate (rub anti-clockwise) solar plexus reflex, diaphragm, adrenal and kidney reflex points
 - Gentle relaxation techniques, & Endocrine balance
- **Acupuncture, Shiatsu, Homeopathy** can be useful, consult relevant practitioners
- **Aromatherapy**
 - Lemon, mandarin, neroli, ylang ylang, or rosewood oils are all relaxing and anxiolytic (assists in reducing anxiety) and can be use during the entire pregnancy either in a massage blend (5 drops in total in 10ml of carrier oil), a bath (5 drops in the bath), a footbath or in an oil burner
 - Lavender toward the second half of the pregnancy is also relaxing

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NATURAL REMEDIES FOR CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME

Carpal tunnel syndrome is most often due to increased swelling in the hands and wrists especially towards the end of the pregnancy. This results in numbness, stiffness, tingling in the fingers, usually worse in the morning. There can also be pain in the arms.

Here are some suggestions that might help:

- **Exercise:**
 - Stretch the wrists backwards and forwards
 - Massage upwards from the wrist
- **Reflexology:** Lymphatic technique on the hands and feet to relieve the oedema
- **Acupuncture:** Can be helped by a qualified acupuncturist
- **Acupressure:**
 - PE7 above the inside of the wrist, & PE6 which is 3 finger widths above PE7
 - Press both points intermittently for 2-3 minutes twice a day
 - Lu 10 in the middle of the thenar eminence as shown

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NATURAL REMEDIES FOR CONSTIPATION

Constipation occurs often in pregnancy due to the hormonal changes which slow down the movement of food through the digestive system. Iron supplementation as well as a lack of fibre in the diet will worsen the condition.

Here are some suggestions that might help:

- **Dietary changes**
 - Increase intake of fibre: fruits, vegetables, lentils, oats, prunes, figs
 - Increase fluid intake: water, herbal teas, juices, but avoid tea (contains tannins)
 - Eat more vitamin C rich foods: oranges, mandarin, rockmelon, capsicum etc
- **Herbal supplements**
 - Dandelion tea, rhubarb root tea, 2 tsp psyllium seeds in water
 - 1 gram Vit C with food especially if taking Iron
- **Homeopathy:** Nux Vomica, Bryonia, Nat Mur can alleviate the symptoms
- **Reflexology:** Light massage (clockwise) of colon & digestive reflex zones, liver reflex point
- **Acupressure**
 - LI 3, Luz on hands, Lv2, Lv3 on the feet as shown, apply intermittent pressure for 10 seconds at a time
 - GV 6, three finger width below the umbilicus, apply Intermittent pressure for 10 seconds at a time only
- **Aromatherapy**
 - Light abdominal massage with 5 drops in total of either orange oil, mandarin, tangerine, lemon, grapefruit or lemongrass in 10ml sweet almond oil

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NATURAL REMEDIES FOR HEARTBURN

Heartburn is often due to the softening of the valve between the oesophagus and the stomach, due to the pregnancy hormones. Therefore, food and stomach acids irritate the lining of the oesophagus.

Here are a few suggestions that might help or ease the discomfort:

- **Dietary Changes:**
 - Have smaller, more frequent meals
 - Have a light dinner and earlier (at least 2 hrs before sleep)
 - Avoid spicy, fatty foods
 - Eat raw almonds, pineapple or pawpaw after a meal
 - Avoid tea and coffee

- **Herbal supplements:**
 - Fennel, aniseed, chamomile and peppermint teas help settle the stomach
 - Slippery elm bark powder 1 tsp in water neutralizes the stomach, tablets can also be purchased

- **Reflexology:** Sedate (rub anti-clockwise) the reflex point to the stomach and the oesophagus (the midwife can show you the points)

- **Acupressure:** Press intermittently on the midline point four finger breadth above the umbilicus as shown

- **Aromatherapy:**
 - Orange and neroli oil can be used in the second trimester, chamomile
 - Lavender can also be used in the third trimester in a massage blend, add 5 drops in total to 10ml of carrier oil such as sweet almond oil and massage the area gently.

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5. Hoffman, David 1983 **The Holistic Herbal** Findhorn Press, Moray, Scotland



NATURAL REMEDIES FOR INSOMNIA

Insomnia is common in pregnancy, especially in the later stages. It can be caused or aggravated by heartburn, inability to be comfortable in bed, frequency of passing urine and anxiety.

Here are a few suggestions to help with insomnia:

- **Dietary changes:**
 - Avoid stimulants such as tea and coffee, cheese, sugar, chocolate, ham, sausage, potatoes, spinach and tomatoes in the evening
 - Have an early evening meal
 - Drink hot milk, chamomile tea or lime flower tea at bedtime

- **Homeopathy:**
 - Consult a homeopath
 - Passiflor, Coffea, Nux Vomica can help
 - Rescue remedy is also useful, 4 drops under the tongue

- **Reflexology:**
 - Relaxation techniques, solar plexus hold & stretch all toes
 - Sedate (rub anti-clockwise) heart reflex point

- **Aromatherapy:**
 - Lavender oil 5 drops in 10ml carrier oil for a massage
 - Lavender, mandarin, neroli, petitgrain, orange or ylang ylang, a few drops in a bath, a footbath or a burner will help relax

- **Hypnotherapy, relaxation tapes, yoga, massages, breathing exercises** have been found to be very useful

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NATURAL REMEDIES FOR LABOUR PREPARATION

Labour in most cases occurs between 37 and 41 weeks of pregnancy. It is not unusual to go past the 'due date' given to you by the midwife or doctor. Labour length (regular painful contractions) can vary dramatically, from 4 hours to 24 hours.

Here are a few suggestions to assist your body prepare for labour:

- **Preparation for labour:**
 - Raspberry leaf tea or tablets from about 28 weeks, increasing from 1 cup/day or 1 tab/day to 3/day by term. Raspberry tones the uterine muscle.
 - Homeopathic remedy Caulophyllum 30 or 200, consult a homeopath
 - Mental preparation: yoga, relaxation tapes, visualization, hypnotherapy,
 - Hypnobirthing sessions, and Prep for parenthood classes

- **Ripening of the cervix- when you are over your `due date`**
 - Intercourse (prostaglandins in the semen may start contractions)
 - Nipple stimulation: roll one nipple at a time between finger and thumb, this may initiate contractions

- **Reflexology:**
 - Stimulate pituitary and hypothalamus reflex points, cervical reflex point
 - Ankle boogie (vigorous ankle rotation)
 - Stimulate (rub clockwise) colon area

- **Acupressure**
 - LI 4 on the hand, SP6 (3-4 finger breaths above inner anklebone), B 60 (behind anklebone outer aspect), B 67 (base on nail of little toe). Press firmly for 10 seconds, 3 times
 - B60 & SP6 are NOT to be use during pregnancy- only when overdue

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NATURAL PAIN RELIEF IN LABOUR

- **Herbs:**
 - Chamomile, raspberry leaf tea in labour
- **Homeopathy:**
 - Caulophyllum, cimicifuga, gelsenium, chamomilla, pulsatilla, arnica,
 - Bach Flower Rescue remedy can be given depending on description of the pain
 - A kit can be purchased from a homeopath with instructions
- **Reflexology:**
 - Relaxation techniques, calming hold, solar plexus, lung press
 - 'Coping point' or 'balance organ' between contractions
- **Aromatherapy:**
 - Ask for pamphlet, essential oils are available on request in delivery suite to:
 - Help you relax (lavender, clary sage, frankincense, mandarin)
 - Enhance contractions (clary sage, lavender, frankincense)
 - Uplift you (eucalyptus, geranium, peppermint)
 - Ease nausea (peppermint)

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NATURAL REMEDIES FOR LEG CRAMPS

Leg cramps often occur in pregnancy usually worse at night. The cramps can be due to the extra weight, increased fluid circulation or increased nutritional demands such as calcium and magnesium or potassium sodium.

Here are a few suggestions that might alleviate cramps or prevent them from occurring:

- **Dietary changes:**
 - Increase intake of calcium rich foods such as dairy products, canned fish, dark green vegetables, sesame and sunflower seeds, bananas
- **Exercise:**
 - Calf stretch, walking, swimming
 - Elevate the legs while sleeping or sitting
- **Supplements:**
 - Calcium 1500 mg, magnesium 800 mg daily
 - Vit B complex and Vit E are sometimes recommended
- **Herbal remedies:** Cramp bark and ginger decoction
- **Homeopathy:** Mag Phos tissue salt
- **Reflexology:** A full reflexology treatment will improve the circulation
- **Acupressure:** Lv4 on the inner ankle. Firmly press intermittently for 1-2 min as required
- **Aromatherapy:**
 - A foot bath with lavender oil 10 drops, geranium oil 5 drops, cypress oil 2 drops in warm water
 - A massage blend with ginger oil 2 drops and black pepper oil 2 drops in 10ml of carrier oil

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NATURAL REMEDIES FOR MORNING SICKNESS

Morning sickness is common in early pregnancy, but can also occur in the later parts of pregnancy. The cause is unknown but low blood sugar, low blood pressure, hormonal changes, food imbalances, and emotional factors can all contribute to the nausea.

Here are some suggestions that might help:

- **Lifestyle changes:**
 - Relaxation, yoga, mild exercise
- **Vitamins and Minerals:**
 - Vit B6 and Zinc 50 mg each
- **Dietary changes:**
 - Eat a high protein diet
 - Eat a piece of dry toast before rising
 - Avoid spicy, fatty foods
 - Avoid caffeine coffee and tea
- **Herbal supplements:**
 - Ginger in any form: crystallized, in a tea, in capsules
 - Herbal Teas: Lemon balm, chamomile, peppermint, peach leaf
 - Slippery elm bark powder or in capsules
- **Homeopathy:**
 - A variety of remedies can help (Apomorphia, Nux Vomica, Sepia)
 - Consult a homoeopath
- **Reflexology:** is also useful, especially –
 - Stomach and liver reflex points
 - Calming hold and relaxation techniques
 - Balancing hormones
- **Acupressure:**
 - TB3 & TB4, PE5 & PE6 (3 finger widths above wrist midline) on the 23 hands; SP3 & SP4 on the foot as shown in the diagram press intermittently for 1-2 minutes as required
 - Bracelets for motion sickness/ morning sickness can also be purchased from the chemist
- **Aromatherapy:** many oils are not recommended in early pregnancy but mandarin, tangerine, grapefruit, orange, neroli, or lemongrass (5 drops in water in a diffuser/burner) can bring relief



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NATURAL REMEDIES FOR OEDEMA

Oedema (swelling) in pregnancy is usually caused by the general increase in fluid volume and hormonal changes. It is very common and quite normal unless it is associated with high blood pressure and protein in the urine.

Here are few suggestions that may help:

- **Lifestyle/Prevention:**
 - Eat a balanced diet and drink at least 6-8 glasses of water a day
 - Drink dandelion tea, avoid coffee
 - Take regular exercise like walking and swimming, yoga is also beneficial
- **Dietary:** Include celery and cucumber in the diet, as well as onions and garlic
- **Reflexology:**
 - Lymphatic technique on the feet and the hands
 - Bimanual urinary system flush
- **Acupressure:** SP5 and GB40 on the inner and outer ankle as shown. Simultaneously, press intermittently for 10 seconds, 3 times at least twice a day
- **Aromatherapy:**
 - A foot bath with 1-2 drops of either thyme, orange, tangerine, grapefruit or geranium oil will bring relief
 - A massage blend with 2 drops geranium oil, 2 drops grapefruit oil and 1 drop cypress oil in 10ml sweet almond oil can be used when doing the lymphatic drainage on the feet and hands

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NATURAL REMEDIES FOR SYMPHYSITIS

Symphysitis, also called pubic diastasis or separated symphysis, is caused by the softening of the pubic joint (front of pelvis). Due to pregnancy hormones, it creates instability in that joint.

Presents as debilitating pain with difficulty in walking. Usually rest, painkillers, exercises prescribed by a physio and pelvic girdle support can alleviate/reduce some of the symptoms.

Here are a few suggestions that may help:

- **Exercise:**
 - To stop waddling, imagine you have a 20c piece between the cheekbones (buttocks) and hold it while you walk. Walk as if gliding with the feet rather than by lifting the knees. It helps stabilize the pubic bone and strengthens the buttock muscles
 - Pelvic rocking, place feet on a stool or box while sitting, sit on a wedge cushion
 - Osteopathy, chiropractic and physiotherapy treatments can bring relief

- **Pelvic Belt**
 - It helps stabilize the pubic bone.
 - Can be purchased from: TOTAL PATIENT CARE
 - Phone Number: (02)98786188 Cost: \$16
 - Place the belt over the sacrum (the bony bump on the lower back), and around under the pubic bone to keep the hips stable
 - Alternatively, you can purchase some webbing and fasteners and make a belt with it, or buy some stretchy material about 10 cm wide and sew some Velcro on each end for fastening

- **Reflexology**
 - Use a sedation grip or trigger point (firm constant pressure) on the bottom of the heel bone (calcaneous): use the thumb or the finger and press deeply into the zone for a maximum of 2 minutes or until the acute pain is reduced. Do both feet
 - Apply gentle pressure on the solar plexus reflex to relieve anxiety

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4. Personal communication from the Physiotherapy Department CCH



NATURAL REMEDIES FOR THRUSH

Thrush (candida albicans) is an overgrowth of the yeast Candida that lives normally in the vagina. It causes itching, redness, a white cheesy discharge from the vagina. It is made worse by the pregnancy hormones, stress, and a diet rich in refined sugars and antibiotics.

Here are some suggestions that might help:

- **Dietary and lifestyle changes:**
 - Wear cotton underwear, avoid tight pants
 - Use good hygiene, but avoid scented soaps and bath products
 - Avoid stress
 - Avoid sweet foods and drinks (soft drinks, pastries, canned and dried fruit)
 - Avoid foods containing yeast (bread, vinegar, mushrooms, cheese, pickles, vegemite)
 - Avoid coffee, tea and chocolate
 - Eat yoghurt containing acidophilus
 - Eat more raw vegetables, garlic, olive oil
 - Treat the partner as well if possible

- **Supplements:** Garlic pearls, Vitamin C, Zinc, Acidophilus

- **Herbal remedies:** Echinacea tea, Clivers tea, thyme tea, marigold tea

- **Reflexology:**
 - Lymphatic drainage technique, endocrine balance,
 - General relaxation technique and stimulate spleen reflex zone

- **Aromatherapy:**
 - Compresses or sitz bath made with diluted tea tree oil (anti-fungal properties)- 2 to 3 drops added to a bowl of warm water
 - Geranium oil for hormone balance, and lavender oil for soothing

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NATURAL REMEDIES FOR URINARY TRACT INFECTIONS

Cystitis or urinary tract infection (UTI) is not uncommon in pregnancy. It manifests itself by frequency in urination, burning and occasionally abdominal pain. It can sometimes be detected by the "dipstick" test in the clinic.

Here are some suggestions that might help:

- **Prevention:**
 - Drink lots of fluids, avoid tea, coffee, junk foods, avoid stress
 - Wear cotton underwear, wipe yourself from front to back
 - Avoid scented soap and bubble bath

- **Herbal remedies:**
 - Chamomile tea, pearl barley water, nettle tea
 - For uva ursi, corn silk, consult a herbalist
 - Unsweetened cranberry juice

- **Reflexology:**
 - Sedate bladder, and solar plexus
 - Stimulate (rub clockwise) spleen and thymus
 - Lymphatic technique with urinary flush and relaxation techniques

- **Aromatherapy:**
 - Sandalwood oil, chamomile oil or lavender oil, 3 drops in 10ml carrier oil massage into lower abdomen in the last trimester, or 5 drops in a bath
 - Frankincense and bergamot oil can be used in the early stages of pregnancy

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REFERENCES

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NATURAL REMEDIES FOR VARICOSE VEINS & HAEMORRHOIDS

Varicose veins in the lower limbs and on the vulva as well as haemorrhoids are a common occurrence in pregnancy. Due to increased blood volume and hormonal changes affecting the vein walls, there is a slowing down of the return venous circulation.

- **Lifestyle and Dietary changes:**
 - Increase the intake of garlic, onions, vitamin C rich foods with bioflavonoids i.e. orange with the white skins
 - Increase intake of Vitamin E rich foods like wheat germ & sunflower seeds
 - In case of haemorrhoids, follow dietary advice for constipation, include bran, but drink plenty of water
 - Increase exercise: walking, swimming, yoga
 - Do not sit cross legged
- **Supplements:**
 - Vitamin C with bioflavonoids, 1 g at least/day
 - Garlic pearls
 - Sometimes Vitamin E up to 600 mg can be useful
- **Herbal supplements:**
 - Nettle and parsley tea
 - Compresses or ointments made with diluted witch hazel, horse chestnut or yarrow can be applied locally
 - Compress with raw grated potato on haemorrhoids
 - Ice compresses on vulva and haemorrhoids to relieve the pain
- **Homeopathy:** Hamamelis or pulsatilla, consult a homeopath
- **Reflexology:** Lymphatic technique, and relaxation techniques
- **Aromatherapy:** Compress with 3 drops lemon oil, 2 geranium, 1 cypress in water 15 drops geranium oil, 5 drops cypress mixed with a tube of KY jelly for haemorrhoids

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NATURAL REMEDIES FOR POSTNATAL CARE

Here are some suggestions that might help:

- **Perineal care:**
 - Adequate diet, Vit C, Zinc, Vit B6 also help
 - Arnica 6 drops or pilules especially if vacuum, forceps or episiotomy (See a homeopath beforehand)
 - Lavender oil 3 drops in a sitz bath, or cypress oil
 - Calendula tincture compresses, witch hazel compresses

- **To increase the milk supply:**
 - Aniseed, fennel, fenugreek, borage tea
 - Stimulate (rub clockwise) reflexology breast zones on the top of the hands just below the knuckles, & on top of the feet
 - Lemongrass and jasmine oil, 2 drops in 10ml carrier oil, make sure you wash it off prior to breastfeeding

- **Engorgement and mastitis:**
 - Cabbage leaves compresses- keep cold in fridge, wash well, and discard when leaves reach body temperature
 - Sedate (rub anticlockwise)- reflexology breast zone
 - Cool compresses of peppermint or eucalyptus oil (2 drops in water)
 - Compress of tea tree oil if there is mastitis

- **Baby blues**
 - Bach flower rescue remedy
 - Oils of jasmine, rose, ylang ylang or frankincense: 1-2 drops in a burner

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