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pregnancy

APRIL 2006

baby & you

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Rapid recovery

New mum Laura found that Chinese medicine helped both her and her baby to recover quickly after the birth

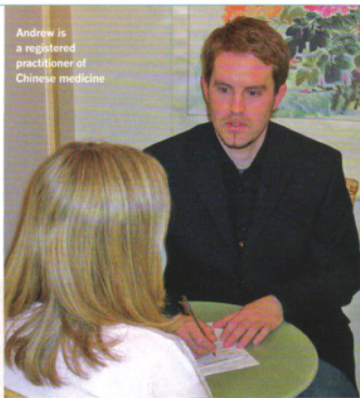
There's no doubt that although both pregnancy and birth are amazing experiences, they can also be exhausting. First-time mum Laura Connor wanted to ensure that she was as well equipped as possible to deal with the labour, and the aftermath, so that she'd be able to enjoy and care for her baby as soon as possible after the birth. She had visited local Chinese medicine practitioner Andrew Loosely at the Healthwise Clinic in Buckinghamshire in the past, and the treatment had proved to be such a revitalising experience - both mentally and physically - that it felt natural for her to employ Chinese medicine to help her through her pregnancy and labour.

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Andrew is a registered practitioner of Chinese medicine

drops after giving birth. 'She's exhausted and needs a tonic.' This tonic is a special herbal formula, which Andrew gave Laura to take in capsule form a day or two after the birth, for a couple of days.

For most of the new mothers who attend the clinic, it takes two visits over a fortnight or three weeks to restore their energy (using both herbal remedies and acupuncture). But Andrew says: 'We work until the person is happy - it could be in a week, it could take a year.'

This flexible time-frame is key to Andrew's postnatal work, as he feels it's not just a case of restoring energy but also of preventing the onset of mental problems like postnatal depression - something he thinks can be inevitable if a new mother doesn't properly recover from the strains of the birth. 'If your energy drops you can't function properly, and neither can your mind work effectively - you can become irritable and unhappy,' he says. 'I often see women who are suffering from depression 10 years on, because they didn't take time out after the birth to recover properly.' He stresses that his approach is focused on prevention rather than cure - hoping to avoid the problem in the first place.

'After the birth we help the mother to recover - it's a case of balancing energy levels and blood quality'

try it

'The treatment certainly gave me more energy, and I think that helped me to avoid depression, too'

The verdict
'I was tired and drained after the birth, and that's why I went back to the clinic,' says Laura. 'After the treatment I certainly had more energy, and I think it helped me to avoid depression, too.' And while she was initially wary of acupuncture - which Andrew employs mainly for relaxation purposes - Laura is now a convert: 'After a while it felt like I was almost addicted to it. It was like having some time out - a bit like therapy.'

What's more, when Laura returned to Healthwise with Olivia a few weeks after the birth to get more herbs to give her body a boost, she discovered that it's not just new mums who can benefit from Chinese medicine. 'Olivia had a lot of wind when she was very little, and a bit of colic,' she says. 'She really struggled with stomach cramps, and Andrew advised me to give her fennel seed water help with her digestion.' And that wasn't the only solution he provided. Laura adds, 'Andrew massaged a special pressure point in the fleshy bit between Olivia's thumb and finger, and the wind came out at both ends!'

A lifestyle choice
Having had eight sessions at the Healthwise Clinic before, during and after her pregnancy, Laura is so impressed with Andrew's methods that she and Olivia now pay visits to his clinic to deal with their everyday health problems. 'Andrew just takes my pulse and looks at my tongue,' Laura says. 'It's incredible - he can always tell what's wrong with me straight away.' He'll say something like, 'You've got a sore knee today haven't you?'. And he's always right!

FURTHER INFO
● Healthwise Clinic of Natural Medicine: 75-77 High Street, Burnham, Buckinghamshire SL1 7JX. Call 01628 668339, email info@healthwise-clinic.com or visit www.healthwise-clinic.com
Consultations are free and fees depend on the treatment, but can range from £9 to £60 a week. Acupuncture takes around half an hour and costs £35, with a course of four sessions costing £126. Herbal medicine costs from £9 to £25 per week.