

Food as Medicine: Healing Postpartum Edema



Edema is defined as significant fluid retention and swelling. Postpartum it can affect: feet, ankles, arms, hands, breasts, and the area around a C-section incision. Postpartum edema can be attributed to various factors including excessive IV fluid during labor and delivery, or the natural increase of fluids your body produces in pregnancy. The following foods and recipes function to help rid edema by supporting your kidneys to flush out excess fluids, balance electrolytes, support your thyroid function, and reduce oxidative stress.

Quick Snacks to Clear Edema

- Almonds
- Avocados
- Bananas
- Beets
- Bell peppers & hummus
- Brazil nuts
- Celery & nut butter
- Cranberries
- Cucumbers & hummus
- Dried seaweed
- Grapefruit
- Hazelnuts
- Oranges
- Peaches
- Pecans
- Pineapple
- Raisins
- Strawberries
- Sunflower seeds
- Watermelon

Nettle & Dandelion Infusion

5 minute prep time | 4 servings | Inspired by Passionate Nutrition

This infusion functions to support your kidneys and liver. Nettles and dandelion are herbal diuretics to help flush out edema while restoring lost minerals. Nettles have also been shown to reduce the hardness of breasts that initially comes with engorgement.

Ingredients

- 1 ounce (about 1 cup, or a big handful) dried nettle leaves
- 1/2 cup dried dandelion leaves
- 4 cups cold water
- Optional: cream, honey, vanilla, or salt

Directions

- In a large pitcher, combine the nettles, dandelion, and water, stirring to submerge the leaves
 - Let sit at room temperature for 4 to 12 hours
 - Strain through a fine-mesh strainer, and serve at room temperature
 - Option to use a large French press to infuse the water without having to strain the leaves
 - If you desire, you can add cream, honey, vanilla, or salt to taste
 - Refrigerate any left over infusion for up to 1 week
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Electrolyte Tonic

5 minute prep time | 2 servings | Source: The National University of Natural Medicine

This tonic is a mineral dense & electrolyte rich drink, functioning to support your kidneys in draining excess fluid while restoring vital minerals. Highlighted nutrients include potassium and vitamin C.

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup water
- 2 cups coconut water
- Juice from 1 orange
- Juice from 1 lemon
- Juice from 1 lime
- Zest from orange, lemon, lime
- 1 tbsp maple syrup or honey
- 1.5 tsp pink Himalayan salt or sea salt

Directions

- Place all ingredients in a large pitcher and stir until well combined.
 - Taste and adjust as necessary. Enjoy 1-2 cups per day.
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References

Minerals. Linus Pauling Institute. <http://lpi.oregonstate.edu/mic/minerals>. Published April 22, 2014.

Marcia Nelms. Nutrition Therapy and Pathophysiology.

Best herbal galactagogue for the week after childbirth - Mother Food. <http://mother-food.com/best-herbal-galactagogue-week-childbirth/>.