

# THE SADHAKA

the seeker

A Monthly Newsletter from the Seattle Holistic Center

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## Awaken your body

Spring, the season of rebirth and revitalization, is finally visible outside. This month's Sadhaka has articles that will renew you. A special sequence of yoga poses will awaken your immune system while a recipe for spring tea will bring life to your lungs.

Speaking of births, we've got the scoop on the best tea for uterine strengthening, and a list of breastfeeding resources for all the new mamas out there.

Dear Friends,

I have been the guardian of an orchid for the past few years. One day I noticed that it had several orb-like blossoms waiting to burst into flowers. I was ecstatic! This was the first time I have ever had an orchid bloom for me. Orchids are very sensitive and delicate plants requiring just the right conditions to flower. And here it was about to grace me with its beauty.

I noticed that the stem was hanging down from the weight of the buds, so I very carefully pulled it to fasten it to the stake when it snapped! My heart wrenched! I've destroyed it, I thought. Upon closer examination I saw that the stem was hanging by a thread, so I continued to secure it and then prayed for it's forgiveness for my clumsiness. I felt pretty bad. I sang to the orchid and lovingly attended to it daily.

One morning I came in and there the orchid was in all her glory - elegant mauve flowers dancing in the morning sun. My heart swelled with a joy that can only be felt. When I inspected the stem I saw what looked like scar tissue. The orchid had healed itself. What a testimony to the power of love!

Blessings,

Colette

## Strengthen Your Immune System

By Colette Crawford, RN, BSN

I was a single parent of two small children and in nursing school when I began to take yoga more seriously. It would have been an understatement to say I had stress in my life! There were nights when sleep seemed impossible. I was so wound up with assignments and papers that I found myself scrubbing walls at midnight.



As I learned more yoga, the frenzied wall scrubbing was replaced with poses like shoulderstand or *viparita karani*. My furrowed brow began to soften and my nerves calmed. An added bonus was my health improved - I rarely got sick.

We now know that the nervous and endocrine (hormone) systems function as one system. There are many poses in yoga that work specifically on the endocrine glands, including the pituitary, adrenals, thyroid and parathyroids. These glands help to control processes associated with the regulation of metabolism and energy supply, responses to stress, extracellular fluid, and, with growth, development and reproduction.

The following poses and their sequence strengthen the endocrine system and improve the body's immune response. You can hold the poses for several minutes each. If time doesn't allow you to complete the entire sequence, you can omit some of the poses, but it is important to follow the order suggested. If you are

pregnant seek the guidance of one of SHC's prenatal instructors for adjusting the poses. Refer to "Yoga the Iyengar Way" or "Light on Yoga" for detailed descriptions of the poses.

- Alternate nostril breathing - 5 rounds
- Downward facing dog
- Baddhakonasana with bolster
- Shoulderstand
- Plough pose
- Viparita karani - legs up wall
- *Janu sirsasana* with head supported by bolster or chair
- Downward facing dog
- Uttanasana - standing forward bend
- Alternate nostril breathing - 5 rounds
- *Savasana* - corpse pose

## Drink Your Tea!

Red Raspberry Leaf tea, that is!

Red raspberry leaf has been known for centuries as a healthy tonic for pregnancy. It has the right ratio of calcium and magnesium, is rich in vitamin C, has vitamins A, B complex and E, iron and other minerals. Benefits are increasing fertility (in men and women), decreasing nausea and toning the uterus, making for an efficient labor and more.



Nettle leaves are high in calcium, potassium, phosphorus, sulphur and iron, along with vitamins A, C, D and K (your baby also gets vitamin K in utero, which increases his/her blood clotting factors). Along with toning the uterus, kidneys, liver and other organs, Nettles can help reduce leg cramps, prevent hemorrhage after birth and hemorrhoids.

Raspberry and nettles used together make a great pregnancy tea for a speedy and efficient birth! This tea is an excellent tonic for anyone, man, child, woman-pregnant, postpartum, menstruating or menopausal. So, drink your tea!

## A Spring Elixir For The Lungs

By Eric M. Pollard

Spring has sprung, the sun has reemerged, the air is clear and brisk--but do you still feel like you're carrying Old Man Winter around in your chest? You may be like a lot of people who are finding the remnants of that vestigial winter cold or bronchial affliction have taken up residence in your lungs and just won't clear out. Well, it's time to do a little spring cleaning!



That thick, wallpaper-like stuff that feels like it is stuck in your lungs is known as "bronchial catarrh" to herbalists. Cough and cough as you might, and nothing seems to come up. But you know it's there, because you can feel it weighing you down. The key to removing this sludge is to liquefy it, to thin the mucus, and then cough it up! In short, expect to expectorate!

I make up a blend of herbs for this condition that I call Lung Repair Tea. It is a

blend of expectorants and bronchial cleansers designed to loosen the impacted bronchial mucus while toning the lungs and reducing inflammation. Needless to say, quite a few former smokers verily swear by the stuff.

Now I will warn you: This tea is not the most delicious concoction in the world. It is slippery to the taste, a little slimy, with a mild bitterness to it that might evoke an "ugh" at the first sip. Just remember that you are drinking a medicine, not a soft drink! The benefits of a lungful of healing prana are worth the momentary discomfort. So, let's clear those lungs, be good to our bodies, breathe a little easier, and enjoy the spring more fully. Hopefully, the healing attention we pay to our lungs with this tonic may even act as a preemptive strike to the ever scurrilous and approaching allergy season. Good luck!

Lung Repair Tea:

2 parts Wild Cherry bark

2 parts Elecampane root

2 parts Pleurisy root

1 part Dandelion root

2 parts Comfrey root (optional)

1 part licorice root

1 part Marshmallow root

1 part slippery elm bark

½ part Ginger root

Steep the tea blend for 10-15 minutes in boiling water, covered using 1 teaspoon to 1 tablespoon of the mixture per cup. It is best to drink 3-4 cups daily. An ounce of Lobelia herb can be added for serious cases where asthma is an associated condition.

***SHC note: As always, pregnant and nursing moms and people with chronic medical conditions should consult a professional herbalist before using curative substances, even with "all natural" ingredients.***

*Pollard is the manager of Tenzing Momo & Co., the Tibetan Buddhist herbal apothecary in the Pike Place Market. This piece is reprinted from the April 1997 Sadhaka.*

## Breastfeeding? Get The Support You Need!

By Shawna Gamache

If you are having a hard time breastfeeding, you are not alone. Because nursing is natural, many of us assume that it will happen easily. Even if we've prepared ourselves for a challenge, it can be a shock just how difficult it is at first.

Luckily, there are lots of great local resources to help you through these early months. Breastfeeding is not easy, but it is so worth it! Get the support you need to keep going. Here are some resources to get you started:



[Birth and Beyond](#) in Madison Park (at 27th and Madison) offers an excellent class called [Breastfeeding 911](#). The class is led by lactation consultants and only costs

\$10. Get expert advice and help to overcome your challenges. You don't need to register-- just show up with your baby and they will help you! It's currently offered on Fridays from 11 a.m. to 12:30.

[La Leche League of Washington](#) also offers area support groups in many Seattle area neighborhoods, including [one](#) that meets on the third Wednesday of each month at the Good Shepherd Center in Wallingford.

Birth and Beyond also has a free breastfeeding help line, available seven days a week between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. Lactation consultants will discuss your questions and concerns and arrange for a home visit if necessary. Home Visits cost \$150. The Breastfeeding Services Line is (206) 615-8078.

If you delivered at a hospital, lactation consulting from that hospital may be available to you after you go home. Swedish has an [outpatient lactation clinic](#) for moms that need help after going home. The clinic is open weekdays and fees are \$90 for the first visit and \$60 for follow-up visits. You can reach the clinic at (206) 386-3740. Swedish also has a drop-in [breastfeeding support group](#) that meets at Swedish Ballard on Wednesdays from 2 to 3:30 p.m.

If you had an out of hospital birth, you deserve a visit with a postpartum doula or a lactation consultant. Get a referral from your midwife or a friend, or check out this [directory](#) of area consultants.

Connecting with other new mamas is also crucial. Sharing breastfeeding hurdles and accomplishments makes the whole process so much easier. Plus, you can pick up some ideas from watching other mamas nurse their little ones, and get a chance to try out public nursing in a supportive environment.

Seattle Holistic Center hosts free open door sessions for moms and babies (and moms-to-be) Mondays through Thursdays from 12:30 to 2 p.m., where moms can meet, visit, drink nursing tea and hang out with their babes together. On Tuesdays, women will have a chance to share their birthing experiences, so this is a great time for expectant mamas to come by.

Another great place to meet new moms is at Birth and Beyond's [First Weeks](#) class in Madison Park. It is a twice-weekly drop-in, informal question and answer session led by area baby expert Ann Keppler. Dads are welcome too! The class is currently held on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 12 to 2 p.m., and it's not at all unusual to see parents straggle in at 1 or even 1:30.

The Parent Trust for Washington Children also offers [seminars and resources](#) for new parents in several area locations.

The Program for Early Parent Support lets you meet other new parents near you. [PEPS groups](#) are formed based on neighborhood and baby age, so you get to meet other parents that live close. There are daytime and evening options, and one or both parents can attend.

Before you know it, breastfeeding will feel comfortable and natural for you. Your baby is very lucky to have a mama like you!

*Gamache is co-founder of [Moms Alive](#), a blog and website that aims to inspire and inform new Seattle-area mamas. She is also editor of Sadhaka.*

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