

Special Report

1

Vegetarian Diet in Postpartum Care

Buddhist Dalin Tzu Chi Postpartum Care Center

By/Chiang Pei-Ju





A new mom can get depressed while in postpartum care and trying to assuring a healthy newborn. The postpartum care center in Dalin Tzu Chi hospital provides team care with integrated Chinese and Western medicine to protect the health of the mother and infant. The team works diligently to provide high-quality care before, during, and after child birth. With delicious vegetarian meals and an intelligent remote system, postpartum care stay is like a vacation for mother and infant to enjoy an intimate bonding.

“Whenever I look at the center’s pictures, I miss dearly the vacation-like life. It is so comfortable, and truly

amazing!” The Ning’s couple cannot forget the time in the center after going home. It was like a family vacation. Every time when they returned with the baby for vaccination, they would visit the center. They called it the “Yuezi Center.” But its formal name is “Buddhist Dalin Tzu Chi Postpartum Care Center, Tzu Chi Medical Foundation.”

Perfect and Thoughtful Care; Wonderful Experience

At first, the couple was against a vegetarian diet. They planned for a postpartum care center near their



neighborhood. But when they overheard their friends' conversation about the new postpartum care center at Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital, they decided to give it a try. Ning laughed and said, "We both had never been a vegetarian due to the love for meat. Before, we deeply disliked vegetarian foods. However, after staying in the center, our love of meat is changed." He was amazed by the vegetarian meals that were not only tasty and delicious, but were also prepared meticulously. One can see the painstaking details from the use of seasonings, nutrients and colors. Even the menu for children is surprising different during the week. All three meals a day are delivered fresh and hot. My wife had serious constipation; unexpectedly her condition was totally improved after a month.

Ning mentioned the great challenge of many new moms after giving birth. There are so many cultural taboos, especially for the first newborn. We were stressed and confused. I remembered the first four days with our newborn -- not knowing why she constantly cried no matter how hard we tried to comfort her. This made us, the first-time mother and father, feel helpless. Ning said, "Fortunately, the nurses here would come to the rescue. They were very prepared and knew what was needed. They also took the initiative to advise us about things that we needed help, which made my wife at ease in the

center, and my mind calmed."

A companion bed is usually foldable and small, but Ning was surprised to find a spring-coiled bed at Dali postpartum center, that proved to be very comfortable. Sometimes, parents come to stay so they find comfort. "The light in the room was sufficient, and made you feel joyful. Inside the room, there is also an induction range for heating. So, my wife can warm her food at any time. We can give her various foods and not worrying about the supply of breast milk." When talking about his experience at the center, Ning spoke like an advocate, pointing out the advantages one after another one.

Relaxing in a Sophisticated Environment; Protected by a Competent Medical Team

"Without good postpartum care, the body may suffer at an older age. Maternal women are having problems with care of newborns and the painful experience of labor. If they do not have any assistance, they may have postpartum depression partially due to exhaustion. It is essential to have appropriate care and nutritious supplements, which will have long-term impact on health. In 2019, Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital established a postpartum care center that integrates pediatricians, OB-GYN, traditional Chinese medicines, psychologists, and nutritionists to provide

the mother and newborn with complete high-quality care. It provides a comfortable and smart accommodation, along with personalized a healthy vegetable diet. Combining the best Chinese and Western medicine, with a strong medical team as a backbone, it makes postpartum care a happy experience.

Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital is in a small town Dalin. It is a place full of orchid fragrance. It provides consistent service

from prenatal care to delivery and postpartum care. It is a bittersweet process for Dalin Tzu Chi to make a postpartum center a reality. Liu Zhenrong, Secretary of the Director, said the main purpose of building a postpartum care center is the consideration of the major senior population in the Yunjia area. Due to advanced age and declining health, they are unable to care for their daughters and daughters-in-law during the





The Dalin Tzu Chi Postpartum Care Center providing vegetarian diet with balanced nutrition intakes which are well-planned by dietitians.

postpartum period. Therefore, the hospital stepped in to provide comfortable and professional postpartum care immediately after delivery in the hospital. Starting from a year ago, colleagues from different units had numerous meetings, and collaborated to present a warm and high-quality service. Now the wish is realized, the team is very delighted.

The center has 15 suites. The interior is European styled: simple, bright, and comfy. Heating is provided in winter, and there are two floor plans - "Joyful Family Suite" and "Well-being Delicate Suite". Every suite has two beds, one for the

maternal woman and the other for the companion. The five-star bathroom has separated wet and dry areas. Additionally, amenities include a recreational center, newborn nursery room, multipurpose classroom, exercise room, and breastfeeding room. Nursing moms and babies can have a home-like atmosphere to enjoy, and a healthy environment to bond.

At the same time, the hospital provides integrated care from different units, including regular check-ups by pediatricians and obstetrician-gynecologists.

Cordless Smart Space; Comprehensive Service

Shen Chin-Hua, supervisor in-charge, states that the main entrance of the postpartum care center has a "Video Telecom" and "Visitors Thermal Screen." Anyone with high temperature will be denied entrance to reduce the chance of infection.

Besides being spacious, room amenities include household appliances, good quality beds and furniture, and a "Wireless Intelligence Integrated System." The bedside panel can connect a cellphone to the TV. Baby monitoring feature allows the family to see the baby even at home or out for exercise. A big screen TV serves as the display. This

protects moms in reading manuals from a distance. The system allows access to personal medical information and the internet, and to digitally sign for documents.

The center spares no effort to promote the interaction between the mother and baby. The height of the baby crib in the room is adjustable to reduce the frequency of bending to protect the mother's back. The care team can also monitor the baby's temperature, heartbeat, breathing condition through the system so the mother can sleep peacefully.



The Ning's family enjoyed a wonderful 30-day off in the Dalin Tzu Chi Postpartum Care Center

Vegetarian Diet; Chinese and Western Medical Care for Health

Rest and healthy food are essential during postpartum care. For the mother's health, providing a balanced diet is the primary task of a nutritionist. Whole food diets are fresh, natural, and diverse. According to the Chinese and Western medicine, good delicious and nutritious foods can replenish mother's milk and energy. There is plenty to choose on the menu, all nutritious vegetarian. Considering a mother may not eat on time because of resting or breastfeeding, food is kept warm for up to two hours to guarantee its freshness.

Although Ms. Zen, a first-time mother, is not a vegetarian, a one-month postpartum care at the center did not make her feel any discomfort. Instead, she said she was well cared for, feeling great, and having sufficient breastmilk. The happiest thing for her is her baby was born at 3600 grams. After one month's care, the baby increased weight to 5000 grams, thanks to the nutrients from the mother's milk. Chen Yingying, a medical volunteer, also said, the postpartum care center provides a "five-star" environment, as well as a "five-heart" care because one can see a homey feeling and warmth everywhere. Her mother was especially happy because vegetarian food without

the killing of animals is a blessing for her daughter and grandson.

There are some common problems for maternal mothers: pain from breastfeeding, insufficient breast milk, abdominal bloating, sore lower back, vaginal

discharge, swelling, insomnia, dizzy, headache, and constipation, etc. These can be relieved by Chinese herbs two weeks after giving birth, which helps the body to recover and strengthen health.

The center provides some teas and



The Dalin Tzu Chi Postpartum Care Center has strong medical backup with the Departments of O&G, Pediatrics, Traditional Chinese Medicine, the dietitians, and the nursing team.



With wireless intelligence integrated system, the center provides bedside panel to connect a cellphone to the TV; the baby monitoring feature allows the family to see the baby even at home or out for exercise.

soup, such as raw-milk tea, lactation tea, liver-care tea, Sishen soup (including four Chinese medicinal ingredients), and so on. One can choose the Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) where a TCM doctor uses meridian system diagnostics to prescribe customized care, such as bath soap made from Dafong grass and old ginger.

TCM Yang Shu-Yi said, the first week after childbirth, the mother is weak due to blood loss and decreased energy, the spleen and stomach at this moment have not recovered to normal. Therefore,

strengthening the health of spleen and “chi” is the main task at this period. So, the diet should be light and reducing greasy food like chicken broil with alcohol. The soup base includes ingredients Sishen (Sishen Soup is a soup made from common yam, *Euryale ferox* seeds, lotus seeds and Tuckahoe); additional herbs will be added according to individual need. The second week’s diet should emphasize on boosting energy, increasing protein-rich food. As to Chinese medicinal food, the Dong Quai (*Angelica sinensis*) soup and Shiquan soup (including ten



Nursing moms and babies can have a home-like atmosphere to enjoy, and a healthy environment to bond.

Chinese medicinal food) will be added to improve the function of the liver. Three to four weeks after childbirth, it is time to nourish the liver and kidney. The diet includes black and dark green ingredients, like black beans, bok-choi, spinach, sesame, and so on. The herbal Chinese medicine includes Dihuang pill that is made from six Chinese herbs, and ingredients care for the liver and kidney like Heshouwu (*Fallopia multiflora*) and Du Zhong (*Eucommia ulmoides*) will be added.

Mother and Infant Interaction; Warm Nursing Care

The baby crib next to the mother's bed is equipped to monitor breathing and heartbeat. Nurses monitor the condition of the baby all the time to reduce the risk of sudden death syndrome. The windows in the neonatal room are equipped with smart safety glass. There are no curtains to prevent dust mites so it is convenient for the family to see the infant. There

are so many designs that make the care center the first smart postpartum care center in the Yujia area.

Supervisor Shen said, “The postpartum care center has established a smart system that is safe and comfortable. Besides our medical expertise, we also provide a warm and loving environment so the family can enjoy.”

During the month-long care, nurses offer classes for baby’s care and exercises to strengthen moms’ pelvic. Developing bonding between the mother and baby, like reading to the baby, can stimulate infant’s brain growth. Dalin Tzu Chi Postpartum Care Center provides the most visionary and warm care to the mother and infant in a suburban area.



The Ning’s family pays a visit to the Dalin Tzu Chi Postpartum Care Center to thank the team members.