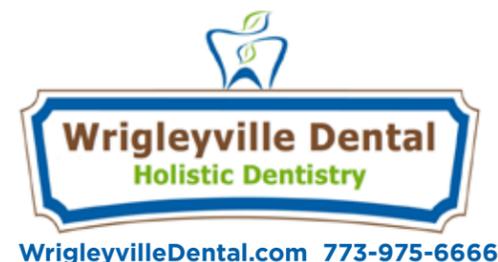




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November 2019

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## Welcoming Maya Into the World

At the end of August and one week before her due date, we welcomed our second baby girl to the family. Her name is Maya Nikola, named after both my paternal grandparents. She's eating, sleeping, and doing everything a baby does. Her transition into our family has been overwhelmingly positive, and Sonya has been a great big sister. She loves helping with diaper changes, and if she hears Maya crying, she tells us, "Baby's crying," and runs to rock her in her bassinet. She's always asking how "Baby" is doing and where "Baby" is if she doesn't see her. Plus, Sonya uses her as an excellent excuse for why she can't nap or go to sleep at her given bedtime, "Because Maya's crying, I can't sleep. I'll have to play some more then."

As any of you with two or more kiddos can probably relate to, we're trying to find the right balance of giving Sonya and Maya the attention each of them needs. I'm really lucky to have a lot of help. There's been an influx of love and support from family. We've had an awesome nanny, and my mother-in-law and sister-in-law alternated flying in from Israel to be with us, which was wonderful. My parents are also a huge help. Now that we live only like 20 minutes away, they come over more often to spend time with the girls so I can get things done (like writing this newsletter!) and sometimes just to bring us a meal.

It's been interesting to see some of the differences between Sonya and Maya as newborns. Sonya liked to be bounced all the time — and I mean sitting on a bouncing ball or being held while I run with her type of a bounce. Maya doesn't demand quite as much movement; the sound of a vacuum can suffice to calm her cries. Sonya wouldn't lie by herself after naps, whereas when Maya wakes up, she looks around and doesn't mind hanging out in her bassinet for a bit by herself. Maya give a little warning half-cry when she needs attention before starting to progress in her demanding cries. Sonya would start full on scream-crying no matter what she needed. But both have a great set of lungs that even my grandma, who's hard of hearing, needs to cover her ears for and complains about needing the volume lowered. And both love to be in a carrier or sling as much as possible.

Sonya was born with no hair, and Maya came out with a full head of hair and long nails that already needed to be trimmed. There's an old wives' tale that if you have heartburn during pregnancy, your baby will have a lot of hair, and, man, did I have heartburn with Maya. Who knew that one is actually true?! Sonya has goldish-blond hair and fair skin, and Maya has strawberry-brunette hair, which looks like highlights, and darker skin. Maya was 8.2 pounds and 20 inches long, a full pound more and 2 inches longer than Sonya — ready to come into the world!

My labor experience with each was different too. Sonya was delivered in a water birth, and Maya's was also natural, but on land. They say

the second birth is usually faster, and this was definitely the case. Her labor started progressing quickly, and within 3 1/2 hours, she was born, coming into the world at 11 p.m. on Aug. 29. I had a team of doulas and midwives there to help me through the process. The next morning, the pediatric doctor came in to look at Maya. "Wow! She is such a strong, healthy looking baby!" he said. "Do you want to go home today?" So, in less than 18 hours, we were in and out of the hospital with our newborn. It was unexpected and nice to go home early and begin our transition as a family.

Like with Sonya, I ate medjool dates during the last few weeks of pregnancy. There is literature that says eating 4-6 a day, which is harder than it sounds, after 36 weeks of pregnancy can lead to a shorter labor. I also drank raspberry leaf tea, which is supposed to help with labor, and saw a chiropractor to make sure everything was in alignment. I did cranial sacral therapy as well, and I think some of these practices may have contributed to Maya's quick and "uneventful" labor.

Time has been a loose concept these days. My maternity leave is by no means a vacation. Nightly dreams are interrupted every 2-3 hours by a very hungry Maya, and days go by very quickly! My Type A personality is perpetually in "let's be productive" mode. I end each day with a list of things I want to accomplish the following day. Some days, I get to knock out one or two things, and other days, the list just grows. There's a part of me that always wants to get things done, but I'm also realizing how important it is to rest and pace myself. During a conversation, my doula recommended a really interesting book called "The First Forty Days." It looks at different cultures and postpartum practices and includes recipes geared toward nourishing and replenishing the new mother.

I'd never really thought about it until I read the book, but in America, we don't have much of a postpartum culture. We expect mothers to deliver their baby and step into their new life. We emphasize pregnancy and the birth process but not what happens in the days that follow. There's little time for nurturing mother and baby. The U.S. is one of the only developed countries that doesn't provide mandatory paid maternity leave to parents. Every other country gives some sort of paid leave and some even give a monetary "gift" for each child who's born. Sweden gives new parents a year of paid time off so the mother can nourish herself and child and bond. We're behind in that way. "The First Forty Days" has illuminated just how important this precious time together is for mother and baby. Many cultures take it upon themselves to surround the new mother with female friends and relatives for the first several weeks, 2-12 depending on the culture, relieving her from her daily

## DIY BATH BOMBS FOR ULTIMATE RELAXATION

It's been a long week, and you deserve to relax. Take your soothing soak to the next level by dropping one of these homemade bath bombs into the tub. They'll help rejuvenate your skin and provide unbeatable aromatherapy. Certain scents like eucalyptus can even combat the effects of a stuffy nose. They're easy to make, more affordable than buying in-store, and make a perfect gift for the upcoming holidays.

### DIRECTIONS

1. In a bowl, mix baking soda, Epsom salt, and cornstarch until the mixture is clump-free.
2. In a separate bowl, mix citric acid, coconut oil, water, essential oil, and, if desired, natural dyes. Tweak your scents and their quantity to your preference. Try floral essential oils, like lavender or rosemary, or get seasonal with scents like cinnamon and peppermint. If you decide to add color, try natural dyes like beet or blueberry juice.
3. Very slowly add the wet mixture to the dry mixture, 1 tsp at a time. Whisk as you go and slow your pace if it starts to look fizzy. You're finished when the mixture barely clumps together, like damp sand.
3. Stuff your molds before the mixture dries out. Press and hold the molds firmly for at least 30 seconds. Allow bath bombs to dry in the molds for 24 hours before using.

You're ready for your bath! Drop a bomb in the steamy water and watch the magic happen. You'll soon be enveloped in soothing foam and satisfying scents for ultimate relaxation. Store your extras in a moisture-free container and use them within six months. Enjoy your bath!

### INGREDIENTS

- 8 oz baking soda
- 4 oz Epsom salt
- 4 oz cornstarch
- 4 oz citric acid
- 2 1/2 tbsp coconut oil
- 1 tbsp water
- 2 tsp essential oil
- Optional: natural dyes for color

### EQUIPMENT

- Bath bomb molds



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responsibilities of cooking, cleaning, and looking after elder children. It is also a time when traditions are passed on from grandmas, aunts, and sisters to the new mother. They say that having the mother get as much rest as possible and working and working out the least amount is the key to minimizing all sorts of problems, both physical and emotional, in the future. It's an investment to preserve her lineage and give the new mamma strength and support. When this "staying in" period ends, the mom is renewed and ready to start her journey as a mother.

Coming from a Russian culture, parenting is a little regimented. You swaddle the baby, then put them back in their stroller or bassinet. You feed them no more than every two hours and make them cry it out if it's not time to feed yet. Having the child in a carrier on the parent for extended periods of time is frowned upon. With Sonya, and now with Maya, she would fall asleep on me, and if I tried to transfer her right away, she'd wake up. They both want to be on me for several months after being in me for nine. For Russian relatives and friends, this is a no-no. "Put her down, and if she cries, that's okay," they instruct. "Babies get used to it." But I've never felt right about hearing her high-pitched shrieks and seeing tears streaming. We're both just working off of instincts. For her, it's instinctual to want to be held, and it's instinctual for me to hold her.

Looking around at nature, you see this instinct reflected. Talking to my doulas and midwives, I was reminded that, like whales and certain monkey species, we are contact species. We don't leave our young; we keep them close because evolutionarily, someone might hurt or take them. We humans are unlike lionesses, who leave their young to hide while they go off hunting and bringing back food. There are so many benefits human babies get from being held and being near their mother. Regulation of temperature, heartbeat, and breathing are just the physical ones that have been proven to be beneficial. There's even research that sleeping in the same room next to the mother decreases the likelihood of sudden infant death syndrome.

With motherhood, we are given many different messages about what's right and expected. This special time with Maya has been an important reminder that, at least for some aspects of parenting, your gut instinct is one of the best guides you have. So, I am grateful that I get to take this time to soak up the love with my two girls, and I will be ready to see all of you again at the office at the end of November. I hope you have a wonderful Thanksgiving and that you take the time to look for the love, gratitude, and gut instincts that surround you.

—Dr. Teplitzky

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Place a number in every cell in the grid, using the numbers 1-9. You can only use each number once in each row, each column, and each of the 3x3 boxes.



# LET'S TALK GUT HEALTH



November is Stomach Cancer Awareness Month, and it brings important attention to the role your stomach health plays in your overall health and well-being. Your stomach contains billions of bacteria, including healthy probiotic strains. But for many reasons, it can get out of balance.

## TOOTH MERIDIANS AND GUT HEALTH

In acupuncture and other forms of traditional Chinese medicine, meridian charts are used to map out the body's connections. Functioning as a network, somewhat like a highway system, meridian charts show pathways throughout the body. Students of Chinese medicine spend a lifetime learning about these different pathways, including tooth meridians.

According to some of these meridian charts, specific teeth in the lower jaw — 20, 21, 28, and 29 — connect to meridians in the stomach. For someone who's had restorative dental work, such as root canals, done on these lower bicusps, the tooth meridians may help explain why they're experiencing stomach issues.

## PROBIOTICS AND GUT HEALTH

Because our stomach bacteria can become imbalanced, especially if we've taken antibiotics or other medications that kill off both good along with bad bacteria, taking probiotics orally can be a helpful way to return healthy bacteria and restore balance to your intestinal tract. There are many types of great probiotic products available, like MegaSporebiotic, that promote intestinal health and immunity. The MegaSporebiotic probiotic has the most bioavailability because it is spore based and, uniquely, can be taken at the same time as an antibiotic and doesn't need to be refrigerated. Bac-Co-Flor by Marco Pharma is another great probiotic made by a German company. It helps balance intestinal pH and also survives stomach acid, enabling a higher bioavailability without needing refrigeration.

Yogurt, kombucha, and some other fermented foods also contain probiotics. Eating a balanced diet full of fruits and vegetables and avoiding alcohol and tobacco products will also contribute to better gut health. If you are experiencing stomach issues, consult with your doctor to determine the best course of treatment, and encourage loved ones to get screenings if they are concerned about stomach cancer or other issues.

# HAVE YOU TRIED 'FIRE CIDER'?

## What This Zesty Oxymel Can Do for Your Health



"Fire cider" might sound suspiciously like the base of a craft cocktail, but, in fact, it's a spicy, warming version of oxymel, the classic vinegar-honey mixture that herbalists have used to treat ailments and improve health since ancient times.

According to Nourish Shakti, oxymel — literally translated as "acid honey" — dates back to ancient Greece and Persia. It was used to treat all kinds of problems, including indigestion, fevers, and sore throats. Today, when you stir raw honey into your tea with the belief it will help ward off illness, you're unconsciously following in the footsteps of that ancient practice.

Fire cider is a specific type of oxymel, made by adding plants and spices like garlic, peppers, turmeric, ginger, and onions to a base of one part honey and one part vinegar. Nourish Shakti reports that Rosemary Gladstar, the "Godmother of American Herbalism" and founder of the California School of Herbal Studies, coined the term for "a panacea-like folk remedy specifically used for building immunity and aiding during flu season." Now that cold weather is officially upon us, fire cider is the perfect addition to your holistic repertoire.

The Wondersmith, an herbalist and artist based in the Pacific Northwest, mixes up a version of fire cider to aid digestion and reduce inflammation that she says is "equally at home mixed into a zesty salad dressing, stirred into roasted vegetables, drizzled over hearty meats, or added to rich stews." The floral take on tradition includes nasturtium flowers and greens, goldenrod flowers, grated ginger, grated turmeric, bee pollen, apple cider vinegar, and honey, all infused in a cool, dark place for a month, then supplemented with orange slices a week before straining. The finished result, The Wondersmith says, can be drizzled over food or taken alone as a tonic. To read the full recipe and learn how to add a bottle of fire cider to your pantry, visit [TheWondersmith.com/Blog/2019-oxymel](http://TheWondersmith.com/Blog/2019-oxymel).

## Green Beans With Ginger and Garlic

Turkey is, for the most part, a healthy and lean protein. Thanksgiving sides, on the other hand, tend to be a little more indulgent. This year, eschew the classic, creamy green bean casserole in favor of this lighter, healthier, and altogether tastier option.

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 lbs whole green beans, ends trimmed
- 6 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 1/2 tsp ground ginger
- 1 tsp crushed red pepper
- Kosher salt, to taste

### DIRECTIONS

1. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. To the side of the stove, prepare a large bucket of ice water.
2. Cook beans in boiling water for 4 minutes. Immediately transfer to ice water. Drain and pat dry.
3. In a large skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add garlic and cook until fragrant, 30 seconds. Stir in ground ginger and crushed pepper. Add green beans.
4. Cook together for 2-3 minutes.
5. Transfer to plate and serve.

Inspired by Food & Wine Magazine