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## **Dietary omega-3 may ward off post-partum depression**

A Canadian study\* recently reported that the EPA\* and DHA\* essential omega-3 fatty acids work with the body's serotonin levels to relieve stress in new mothers and aid their babies' childhood development.

Levels of EPA and DHA fall during pregnancy and nursing of infants due to their transfer from the mother's blood to elevated quantities in the foetus via the umbilical cord and to newborns via breast milk.

The University of Montreal group found that the hormone serotonin, known for its "feel-good" properties, which is also depleted in mothers during pregnancy, could be replenished by adding sources of omega-3 to the diets of pregnant women and new mothers. This may be particularly beneficial to the 10 to 15 percent of women at risk for postpartum depression.

These findings follow other recent studies confirming that EPA and DHA are essential for normal brain development and neuronal function, and deficiencies can make human beings more prone to stress and psychological symptoms such as depression, adjustment disorders, violence or suicide.

Further studies are needed to confirm these observations, however it appears likely that EPA and DHA omega-3 supplementation during and after pregnancy may prevent or ameliorate the effects of post-partum depression.

Qponics is actively developing a novel aquaponic system to grow algae for the organic production of vegetarian oil high in EPA and DHA omega-3 fatty acids that are essential for good health.

\*Source: Can J Psychiatry. 2012 Nov;57(11):704-12.

\*EPA: eicosapentaenoic acid

\*DHA: docosahexaenoic acid

**Graeme Barnett**

Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director  
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