



Ontario
Chiropractic
Association



PREGNANCY AND YOUR BACK

Did you know that at least 50 per cent of pregnant women experience back pain? And 10 per cent of those report discomfort severe enough to disrupt their daily routines. The good news is that there are steps you can take to baby your back during pregnancy.

What causes pregnancy-related back pain in the first place?

The average healthy weight gain is more than 30 pounds. This extra weight places considerable stress on the back, feet, ankles and knees. As your baby grows, the core abdominal muscles become stretched, and cannot stabilize your posture as well as they did before.

In the third trimester, levels of a hormone called “relaxin” increase ten times. This also contributes to back pain. Relaxin loosens your joints to allow the pelvis to accommodate the enlarging uterus. These loose joints force the muscles of the back and pelvis to work overtime to keep you upright and balanced.

Try these tips to help minimize your risk of back pain:

- Exercise can help increase muscle support for your aching back. Always consult a health care practitioner before participating in a new exercise regimen. Low impact cardiovascular activities, such as swimming, walking, or stationary cycling can help relieve pain and maintain fitness.
- Sleep on your left side to reduce the pressure of the uterus on the large blood vessels in the abdomen, and optimize blood flow to both mother and baby.



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- Place a pillow between your knees to take pressure off your lower back when sleeping on your side. Place the pillow under your knees if you sleep on your back.
- Take frequent, short breaks with your feet elevated.
- Remember, adequate rest restores your energy and gives your back a chance to relax.
- Wear flat, supportive shoes and use a lumbar support pillow in your chair at home or work. If you sit at a computer or desk, take frequent breaks and walk around for a few minutes each hour.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help, especially when lifting heavy objects, including other toddlers and children.



Studies Show

Numerous studies show that back pain can be reduced by manual therapies during pregnancy. In a study of 170 Canadian women those who received chiropractic care reported less pain both during pregnancy and during labour.

A maternity chiropractor can provide safe, effective, and drug-free conservative care to relieve pain, by decreasing pressure on the joints, muscles and nerves of the spine and pelvis.