

BACK TO HEALTH CHIROPRACTIC CENTRE

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Pregnancy and chiropractic

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Chiropractic care if you are pregnant? Absolutely!

Chiropractic care can be quite helpful during all stages of pregnancy.



In fact, pregnant women benefit

from chiropractic care more than any other population group. The period of rapid development, hormonal changes, the laxity of connective ligaments, and shifting of weight-bearing structures, may cause many pregnant women to

experience low back pain. The benefits of chiropractic care may also be noticed during delivery. Many chiropractic patients report that their deliveries were faster and more comfortable.

Drugless Care

An excellent reason for seeing a chiropractor during pregnancy is that it is a drugless health care system. Drugs, whether prescription or over the counter, can harm the growing fetus. There is no such thing as a safe drug.

Physical changes during pregnancy

Pregnancy is a time of rapid biological change. All bodily organs and systems are affected by the growth of the fetus and this brings with it alteration in the body mass, a subsequent change in the centre of gravity and stretching and weakening of abdominal muscles.

Within the early period of pregnancy the woman will feel

tired much earlier and will often experience nausea. The enlarging abdomen shifts the centre of gravity forward, so the body compensates by increasing the curve in the lower back. This is known as "sway back."

By the second and third trimester there is an increase in the hormones estrogen and relaxin which be-

gin to affect the musculoskeletal system by causing softening of ligaments and increased joint laxity. During this phase of pregnancy the pelvic joints are relaxed and capable of greater movement. This allows greater rotation in the sacro-iliac joint and allows alteration in the diameter of the pelvis at childbirth.

Breech Presentations

One of the developments in chiropractic prenatal care has been a method of correcting breech presentations in which the baby isn't positioned properly for birth. Chiropractic techniques are able to release stress on the pregnant pelvis and cause relaxation of the uterus so that the baby will turn naturally. Studies have demonstrated a 94 % success rate in turning babies in utero so they can be delivered successfully.

Pregnancy and lower back pain

Low back pain is the second most common ailment next to nausea. Studies have found that approximately 50% of pregnant women report having back pain.

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Compensation for the enlarging uterus in front produces the need to lean back thus increasing the lower back curve and shifting the centre of gravity further back over the lower extremity. This shift puts increased pressure on the spine’s discs and exiting nerves which will materialize into discomfort and pain.

RESEARCH ON PREGNANCY AND CHIROPRACTIC

It is a common observation that birthing seems to be more comfortable for women who were under chiropractic care:

- In their third trimester they were able to carry to term and deliver children more comfortably
- Needed half of the normally required painkillers during delivery
- Had on average 34% shorter labor times than patients without chiropractic care
- Reported less back pain than the non-treated group

Questions and Concerns

1– Is chiropractic care safe during pregnancy?

⇒ Very safe and sensible for both mother and baby

2– Is it difficult to receive a chiropractic adjustment when pregnant?

⇒ Not at all. Modification to the table or adjusting techniques are made during each stage of pregnancy

3– How late in pregnancy is it possible to get an adjustment?

⇒ Patient’s have received adjustments during labor

4– Can spinal care help postpartum depression?

⇒ For years chiropractic’s beneficial effects on emotional stress and personality have been noted. At least one journal has quoted a doctor as saying that “postpartum depression is a rarity in patients receiving manipulative therapy.

5– Do I have to have a problem in pregnancy to see a chiropractor?

⇒ Not at all. Chiropractic should be used as a preventative maintenance. Periodic spinal check-ups during pregnancy should be as common as periodic weight check-ups

Massage Therapy and Pregnancy

Massage therapy can be very beneficial during pregnancy. Massage encourages musculoskeletal health by assisting the body with the added postural stress. Trigger point therapy will reduce associated muscle spasms and relieve discomfort.

Massage therapy is beneficial in addressing many conditions associated with pregnancy. Specific kneading and vibrations to the colon may help constipation often seen in pregnancy.

Striking of the legs and glutes will assist venous return from the legs. Lymphatic drainage can help reduce swelling in the legs and feet. Specific massage to the chest will help to relieve shoulder girdle stress and breast congestion. Abdominal massage in the later stages of pregnancy will gently massage the baby as well as release abdominal tension. Carpal tunnel is another condition often seen in pregnancy. Lymphatic drainage can reduce the swelling in the area

and take tension off the nerve.

In the long term massage will help restore proper biomechanics and muscle strength after delivery. Scarring resulting from caesarian section can also be reduced with massage therapy.

