

Back and Pelvic Pain In Pregnancy

Staff Information Leaflet

This leaflet is designed to give you an understanding of musculoskeletal symptoms that may occur during pregnancy, the treatment that may be beneficial and some advice on what you can do to help yourself. If your symptoms persist you should seek advice from your GP or Occupational Health Service.

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Introduction

During pregnancy your body will change to accommodate your growing baby. As your baby grows your abdominal muscles will stretch and weaken resulting in changes to your posture. You may also experience changes to the movement of your pelvic joints and surrounding muscles.

The weight of the baby in the pelvis may affect the pelvic floor muscles resulting in weakness and urinary leakage.

It is common to get back and or pelvic pain during pregnancy.

You may experience variable symptoms throughout your pregnancy which could impact on your activities of daily living.

You may feel pain:

- Across one or both sides of the lower back
- Over the pubic bone at the front in the centre, roughly level with your hips
- In the area between your vagina and anus (perineum)
- Spreading to your thighs
- In the mid back

The pain can be worse when you are:

- Walking
- Using the stairs
- Standing on 1 leg (example, when getting dressed)
- Turning over in bed
- Moving your legs apart (example, when you get out of the car)

What can help?

- Keep active but aim to modify activities that make symptoms worse
- Rest when you can
- Wear supportive shoes
- Put equal weight on each leg when standing
- Sit down when getting dressed or undressed
- Put a pillow between your legs in side lying for extra support in bed
- Keep your knees together when getting in and out of the car

It may be helpful to avoid:

- Sitting or standing for long periods
- Going up and down the stairs too often

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- Repetitive lifting or bending. If this is related to your work, ask your manager for a risk assessment.

Additional Support

- Contact your midwife or GP for advice
- Physiotherapy may help you manage your symptoms. This may include advice, exercises and provision of a support belt.
- Seek urgent medical support if you develop severe abdominal or back pain.

Very rarely, some people with back pain may develop Cauda Equina Syndrome. This is a very serious complication. If you develop any of the warning signs below following the onset of your back pain, you should attend your nearest Accident and Emergency Department immediately:

You may not develop all of the following signs and they could develop in any order:

- Loss of feeling / pins and needles between your inner thighs or genitals.
- Numbness in or around your back passage or buttocks
- Altered sensation when wiping yourself with toilet paper
- Increasing difficulty when trying to urinate
- Increasing difficulty in stopping or controlling the flow of urine
- Loss of feeling when you urinate or empty your bowels
- Leaking urine or needing to use pads
- Not knowing if your bladder is full or empty
- Inability to stop a bowel movement or leaking
- Loss of sensation in genitals during sexual intercourse.

Further Advice

Use the links below to access further advice:

Fit for Pregnancy; exercises and advice to stay fit and health during pregnancy. POGP (Pelvic Obstetric and Gynaecological Physiotherapy).

[21xxxxpogppregnancy_signed_off.pdf \(thepogp.co.uk\)](#)

Guidance for Mothers to be and New Mothers: Pelvic Girdle Pain and other common conditions in pregnancy. POGP (Pelvic Obstetric and Gynaecological Physiotherapy).

[23697pogppelvic_girdle_pain.pdf \(thepogp.co.uk\)](#)

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Active Pregnancy Foundation; Find Your Active
[Find Your Active | The APF \(activepregnancyfoundation.org\)](http://www.activepregnancyfoundation.org)

Pelvic girdle pain and pregnancy. Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists
[Pelvic girdle pain and pregnancy | RCOG](http://www.rcog.org.uk/pelvic-girdle-pain-and-pregnancy)

What about work?

Self Referral

The Occupational Health Physiotherapy team can assist in the management of musculoskeletal problems that affect your ability to work. Staff are able to self-refer to physiotherapy via the trusts Occupational health internet page.

<https://www.newcastle-hospitals.nhs.uk/services/newcastle-occupational-health-service/>

Management Referral

If you feel your symptoms are having a significant effect on your ability to carry out your role, discuss this with your manager and request a referral to the Occupational Health Service.

NewcastleOHS

Physiotherapy Team
Ground Floor
Regent Centre
Regent farm road
Gosforth
NE3 3HD

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Review date: January 2027

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