

OPTIMAL HEALTH UNIVERSITY™

Presented by Team Chiropractic GTA

Pregnancy & Back Pain

According to scientific studies, roughly one half of all pregnant women battle backache (Obstet Gynecol 1988; 71:71-5). Fortunately, there's a powerful and safe solution to pregnancy-related backache: chiropractic care. In fact, your doctor at Team Chiropractic GTA Centre helps many expectant moms prepare for their bundles of joy without the needless aggravation of back pain.



Who's at Risk?

Simply the fact that pregnancy-related back pain is so widespread should motivate every expectant mother to focus on prevention. However, some women are at an even greater risk than others, according to a Swedish study of 804 moms-to-be. For example, a history of back pain doubles a woman's odds of backache

during pregnancy. In addition, moms-to-be who have physically demanding jobs are more likely to develop back pain than are their peers with sedentary occupations. Younger women tend to suffer from pregnancy-related backache more than older women — and mothers who have had previous children are at an elevated risk, compared with first-time moms (*Spine* 1991; 16 (4):432-6).

The Back Pain/Hormone Connection

Although backache occurs with similar frequency in both pregnant and nonpregnant women, back pain during pregnancy tends to be more severe. Why does pregnancy provoke such intense back discomfort? Chiropractors, like your doctor at Team Chiropractic GTA Centre, point to a condition called sacroiliac joint dysfunction (also called SI joint dysfunction or SI subluxation). Scientific research shows that SI joint dysfunction is the primary cause of pregnancy-related back pain (*Obstet Gynecol* 1988; 71:71-5).

SI joint dysfunction involves misalignment or restricted movement in the sacrum and two iliac bones that form the pelvic girdle. In preparation for delivery, the body increases production of a hormone called relaxin. This hormone softens the ligaments

that hold together the pelvic bones. Although this process facilitates delivery, it also undermines the alignment of the sacrum and adjacent iliac bones.

Scientific reports support the link between relaxin and SI joint dysfunction. One recent study looked at 200 expectant mothers. Early in their pregnancies, subjects underwent blood tests. Findings showed that women with high levels of relaxin were likely to develop back pain (*Am J Obstet Gynecol* 1999; 180:128-34). Another study, which enrolled 403 women during late pregnancy, found that subjects with severe back pain had much higher levels of relaxin, compared with pain-free women (*Lancet* 1986; 2:243-5).

Posture Problem

According to your doctor at Team Chiropractic GTA Centre, spinal misalignments are a second significant cause of pregnancy-related backache. Because the pelvis is the base of the spine, SI joint dysfunction can also affect spinal posture in the mid-back and neck. During pregnancy, a loosening of the abdominal muscles, which are instrumental in maintaining optimal posture, further aggravates postural problems.

This week, take a moment to give somebody special the gift of health.



**Team Chiropractic GTA, www.teamchiropracticgta.com
8383 Weston Road, Vaughan, Ontario**

Postural misalignments result in a condition called vertebral subluxation. This disorder occurs when spinal motion is restricted or spinal bones (vertebrae) are out of alignment. A wealth of scientific evidence links vertebral subluxation with back pain. Chiropractors correct vertebral subluxations using gentle and effective maneuvers called chiropractic adjustments.

Why Chiropractic?

Why should expectant mothers choose chiropractic to prevent and alleviate back pain? For several reasons. First, chiropractors are specialists in correcting the two main causes of pregnancy-related backache: SI joint dysfunction and vertebral subluxation. Also, chiropractic offers a drug-free approach to pain reduction. Since avoiding unnecessary medication is essential to preventing birth defects, chiropractic provides relief without the worry that comes from taking medication.

And here's another reason to give



chiropractic a try: scientific studies prove it works. Research has demonstrated that this unique health-care approach is highly effective for ending pregnancy-related back pain. For instance, one study that examined

expectant mothers with SI joint dysfunction concluded that, "After manipulative therapy [chiropractic adjustment], 10 of the 11 women (91%) had relief of pain and no longer exhibited signs of sacroiliac subluxation" (*Fam Prac Res J* 1991; 11:149-159).

A plethora of scientific studies also establishes chiropractic as the most potent technique for halting low-back pain associated with vertebral subluxations.

Chiropractic May Lessen Labor Pain

Women who experience back pain throughout pregnancy often suffer back pain during delivery. However, expectant mothers who receive chiropractic care are less likely to battle backache during delivery (*J Manipulative Physiol Ther* 1991; 14:116-8).

Chiropractic may also lessen labor pain by shortening the duration of labor. According to a study presented at the 1991 World Chiropractic Congress, first-time mothers who receive chiropractic care average 24% shorter labor times than women who are not under chiropractic care. And chiropractic patients who have had previous children enjoy 39% shorter labors, compared with control subjects.

Preventing Postpartum Pain

After your baby is born, it's important to continue focusing on back pain prevention — especially if you experienced backache during pregnancy, a condition that ups the likelihood of postpartum pain (*Spine* 1992; 17:53-5).

To avert postpartum backache, prevent vertebral subluxations with regular chiropractic checkups. And, ask your doctor of chiropractic to teach you back-safe baby lifting and carrying techniques.



The Toll of Back Pain on Moms-to-Be

More than one third of mothers-to-be who suffer from back pain feel that it significantly interferes with their daily activities. And 10% of expectant moms miss work due to back discomfort (*Obstet Gynecol* 1988; 71:71-5).

Pregnancy should be an opportunity to reflect on your family's plans and dreams — not a time to struggle with pain. Preparing for a new baby is a daunting challenge for even the most organized mothers-to-be. So, during this meaningful time, be proactive: work to prevent backache before it affects your peace of mind or distracts you from focusing on your family's well being. Make an appointment today for a chiropractic evaluation.

Optimal Health University™ is a professional service of PreventiCare Publishing®. The information and recommendations appearing on these pages are appropriate in most instances, but they are not a substitute for consultation with a health-care provider. Optimal Health University™ may be photocopied (NOT reprinted) exactly as it is published noncommercially by current subscribers ONLY to share with patients or potential patients. Optimal Health University may NOT be reprinted in any print or electronic publication including newsletters, newspapers, magazines or Web sites. Any other reproductions are subject to PreventiCare Publishing® approval. Copyright, 2000. PreventiCare Publishing®. 1-650-853-1993.