

Alleviating Back Pain During Pregnancy

Low back pain is very common among pregnant women.

Back pain during pregnancy may occur due to hormones and/or weight gain. The increased weight may change the center of gravity, placing a significant amount of stress on the musculoskeletal system, especially the spinal column. Utilizing proper posture and body mechanics throughout the day and night will help to alleviate some of the stress and pain felt during pregnancy.

✓ Proper posture includes standing on both feet equally with the ears, shoulders, hips and ankles in alignment. You should avoid standing in one place for more than a few minutes. If you must stand in one place for a prolonged period of time, place one foot up on a stool alternating feet periodically.

✓ Proper sleeping posture involves pillow propping in-between the

knees and ankles, behind the back, and under the pregnant uterus, while lying in the side-lying position with one pillow under your head.

✓ When sitting, keep your knees level with your hips by utilizing a stool or book under your feet. Placing a towel roll behind the small of your back intermittently throughout the day will help you avoid a slouched posture.

✓ When lifting, bend at the knees, not the hips, while maintaining the curve in your lower back.

✓ Practice performing a tummy tuck (gently tighten your abdominal muscles as you breathe) to help stabilize your back while performing your daily activities.

In the absence of medical or obstetrical complications, pregnant women can engage in



moderate levels of activity. Exercise also helps alleviate backaches, neck aches, leg and abdominal cramps, swelling and constipation. Staying fit gives you more energy in the last trimester as well as endurance for labor.

These general guidelines should help you maintain a pain-free pregnancy, but if you do experience discomfort, be sure to seek help from your health care provider. ♦

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