

Pregnancy and Chiropractic Care

Pregnancy and you?

**What happens to your spine
during pregnancy?**

How can Chiropractic care help?

Does it hurt?

**Breech birth and Webster
technique**



169 Spencer Street
Bunbury WA 6230
Phone: 9791 1053

Pregnancy is a very special time when health and well-being is of great importance to you and the child developing within. During this time, there are many demands on both your spine and nervous system. As the baby grows, your body's biomechanics must constantly adapt, and unfortunately this is no easy task.

As discomfort progresses, it can lead to disuse and cause poor movement patterns to develop. Ultimately this detracts from what should be a positive pregnancy experience.

“These symptoms are certainly not something you should have to put up with”

At Walkley Chiropractic, we encourage our pregnant patients to be informed and enjoy the journey that is pregnancy with as little discomfort as possible. We do this because we care about the health of both the mother and developing baby.

Many problems a woman may suffer during pregnancy are directly related to the health of her spine. These include low back pain, mid back pain, groin pain, headaches, sciatica, nausea and dizziness. These symptoms may affect women from as early as the first trimester, and which should not be considered “a natural part” of pregnancy.

These complaints are certainly not something you should “have to put up with”, as there are gentle and effective treatments available.

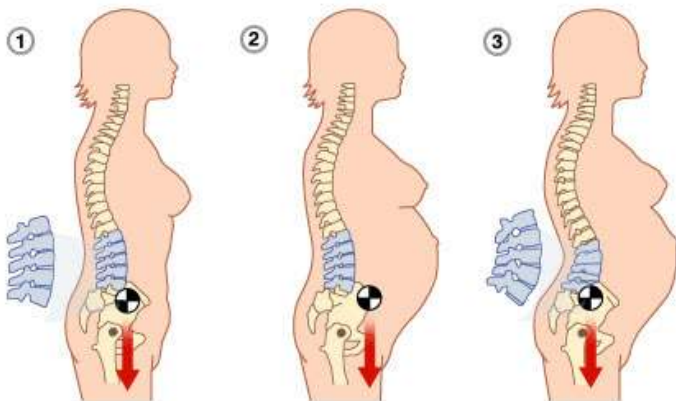
What happens to your spine during pregnancy?

Early in the pregnancy, your body releases the “relaxin” hormone. This leads to increased laxity of ligaments and joints, predisposing you to joint discomfort.

In addition, your centre of gravity changes as both the breasts and belly grow. As the belly expands, the lower back curve is increased adding to the load on the spinal joints in this region. With increasing breast development, the neck and upper thoracic spine then will also become abnormally loaded. Stretching of the abdominal muscles means these muscles are no longer able to give your spine the mechanical support they normally would.

Pre-existing spinal problems are vulnerable to aggravation due to increased load on the spine combined with decreasing stability.

PREGNANT WOMAN



<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/7137104.stm>

The important role of a balanced pelvis

A woman's pelvis supports her growing uterus throughout pregnancy. When the pelvis is balanced, the uterus is able to enlarge symmetrically with the baby. An unbalanced or misaligned pelvis will directly affect the way the uterus is supported.

These imbalances can torque and/or twist the uterus, which reduces the amount of room for the developing baby and may cause a condition known as uterine constraint. If your baby's position is compromised during pregnancy, his/her development may be affected. The constraint may also prevent the baby from moving to the ideal “head down” position required in the final trimester. Any abnormal position of the baby during pregnancy may slow down the labour process and add discomfort to both mother and infant. This can increase the likelihood of interventions such as epidurals, forceps or suction being required.

Chiropractic works specifically with your pelvis throughout pregnancy by restoring a state of balance and creating an environment for safer and easier delivery. Additionally, chiropractic adjustments remove many joint restrictions allowing the body to function optimally throughout this special time. After all, you want to remember the amazing feeling of bringing your child into this world—not necessarily the back pain you experienced while doing so!

A wise man once said
“Knowledge is power, enthusiasm pulls the switch.”

Chiropractic care helps during pregnancy by:

- Correcting abnormal joint movement resulting in a reduction of pain and an increase in function.
- Maintaining joint function and spinal balance to help the spine adapt to changes in weight distribution and posture.
- Ensuring joints of the lower back and pelvis are moving freely to assist in the birth process and pelvic expansion.
- Educating on correct posture, lifting techniques and other lifestyle factors to reduce spinal stress.
- Recommending exercises to assist in maintaining spinal health.

Recent studies have shown that chiropractic adjustments result in easier pregnancies, decreased labour time and helps get new mothers back to pre-pregnancy health. In one study, women receiving chiropractic care throughout their first pregnancy had 24% shorter labour times than the non-chiropractic group and women of multiple pregnancies had 39% shorter labour times.

“84% of women reported relief from low back pain during pregnancy with chiropractic care.”

While these figures are astounding, an additional, 84% of women reported relief from low back pain during pregnancy with chiropractic care.

References:

Fallon J. Chiropractic and Pregnancy: A Partnership for the Future. ICA International Review of Chiropractic Nov/Ded 1990; 46(6:39-42)

Diakow PRP, Gadsby TA, Gadsby JD et al. Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics. Vol. 14, No 2. Feb 1991.



Breech births and the Webster technique

As a fetus grows, its position in-utero does not matter until approximately 32 weeks, when the baby usually turns head-down ready for birth. A breech delivery occurs when anything other than the baby's head passes through the birth canal first. Breech presentations are estimated to occur in approximately 3-4% of full term pregnancies.

Because pregnancy brings with it so many rapid changes, expectant mothers are at greater risk than usual of developing biomechanical dysfunctions and misalignments. This is of concern especially when it affects the pelvis, where misalignments can create tightening and rotation of muscles and ligaments around the uterus. If the pressure from these problems becomes too great it can prevent the baby from turning, and hold him or her in the breech position.

The Webster Technique includes a chiropractic analysis of the pelvic region and specialised, gentle techniques for correction. The aim is to restore balance to the mechanics of the pelvis and tailbone. This means less stress on the woman's body, and more room for baby to move.

The Webster Technique can help babies to assume a healthy birthing position naturally, and reviews of obstetric literature suggest that this can lead to fewer invasive intervention techniques being required. That means a less stressful birth for you, and for your precious little one.

Does Chiropractic hurt?

During pregnancy, chiropractors use special modified techniques to make spinal adjusting easy and comfortable. Adjustments are very gentle during pregnancy, as far less force is required due to the increasing laxity of ligaments. Special adjustive positions are also incorporated to ensure utmost comfort and safety of both the pregnant mother and developing baby.



More reading

Books

Well Adjusted Babies

By Dr Jennifer Barham-Floeani

Gentle Birth, Gentle Mothering

By Sarah Buckley MD

Hypnobirthing

By Marie Mongan

Up the Duff

By Kaz Cooke

Websites

www.spinningbabies.com

www.ipca4kids.org

www.welladjustedbabies.com

www.pregnancy.com.au

Where can you see our Chiropractors?

Walkley Chiropractic - 169 Spencer Street Bunbury WA 6230

Ph: 9791 1053

Bunbury CBD - 1/2 Spencer Street, Bunbury WA 6230

Ph: 9791 5588

Donnybrook Clinic - 3/25 South Western Hwy, Donnybrook WA 6239

Ph: 9731 2525

Collie Clinic - 48 Johnston Street, Collie WA 6225

Ph: 9734 2400

Wagin Clinic - Wagin Medical Centre, Tavistock Street, Wagin WA 6315

Ph: 9734 2400

Dalyellup Clinic - Unit 2 Norton Promenade, Dalyellup

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