



Back pain is the most common complaint health care providers hear from pregnant women. It is obvious that a woman's posture is completely altered throughout those 40 long weeks of gestation so it is no wonder that back pain is so widespread. And widespread it truly is. Pain can be as early as when you first find out that you are pregnant or not appear until late in the third trimester. It may be constant or come and go throughout. The pain may be high between the shoulder blades or at the base of the neck to as low as the tailbone. No matter the location, the cause, or the onset... back pain affects everything.

During pregnancy back pain plays an important role. Often times it is simply associated with the musculoskeletal changes that occur to the spine to offset the growing abdomen and change in the center of gravity. However, back pain could be a warning sign of preterm labor or even infection during pregnancy so it is extremely important to discuss this with your health care provider at your visits or to call the office if you do not have a routine visit soon.

There are many helpful tips to combat back pain.

- Staying active during pregnancy and exercising frequently can help to reduce stiffness, aches and pains. It is recommended to continue your current exercise routine with a few modifications. Keep your heart rate below 140 beats per minute, exercise to fatigue-not exhaustion, and no heavy lifting greater than 30-40 pounds. Abdominal exercises and any exercise that requires you to lay flat on your back should be avoided after 16 weeks gestation.
- Maintaining a healthy amount of weight gain. The general recommendation is to gain between 25-35 pounds total. This target range is appropriate for a healthy pregnancy of a woman of normal weight prepregnancy. For underweight women it is important to discuss calorie consumption and dietary lifestyle. For overweight women, it is not as important to gain during pregnancy and in fact some women will stay the same or even lose weight.
- Getting pregnancy massages on a regular basis can help to relax those overworked and aching muscles. Some facilities may require a note from a medical professional. It is generally safe to get massages but please contact our office if you have concerns.

- Chiropractic care or physical therapy are also extremely beneficial during pregnancy. Talk to your doctor at your next visit to discuss whether or not this treatment option is best for you.
- Maternity support belts are also quite beneficial for back pain because they help support the abdomen to relieve the strain placed on the back and pelvic muscles. There are many different types of maternity support belts available. They are sold at medical supply stores, BabiesRUs, Motherhood Maternity and online. SI joint belts are also helpful and tend to be less cumbersome than maternity belts. You can find one of these SI joint belts at [serola.net](http://serola.net).