

## Pregnancy: We're Watching Your Back

So, you're anxiously awaiting the pitter-patter of tiny feet, but you can't prepare the nest because of back pain... You are not alone! Fifty per cent of pregnant women experience back pain, with 10 per cent reporting severe discomfort that prevents them from carrying out their daily routines.

The weight gain during pregnancy places stress on the back, feet, ankles, and knees. As the baby grows, the abdominal muscles become stretched, and their tone is reduced. Pregnancy also causes the body's centre of gravity to shift forward. As a result, there is an increase in the pressure on the discs and the joints of the low back and pelvis, which now work overtime to keep you upright and balanced.

In a study of 170 Canadian women with pregnancy-related back pain, 72 per cent reported back pain during labour. However, the women who received chiropractic care, reported less pain during both pregnancy and labour.

In another study of 67 pregnant women, daily performance of a single seated pelvic exercise significantly reduced the intensity of back pain during the third trimester. In addition, low impact cardiovascular activities, such as swimming, can help relieve pain and maintain fitness. Always consult a health care practitioner before participating in a new exercise regimen.

Adequate rest restores your energy and gives your back a chance to relax. Lying on your left side has been shown to reduce the weight of the uterus on large vessels in your abdomen, allowing for optimal blood flow to both mother and baby. Supporting your weight by placing a pillow between the knees or leaning against a body pillow will take pressure off the lower back and allow your spine to be in its natural position while you sleep.

Don't let pain hold you back during this exciting time in your life! A chiropractor can provide safe, effective, and drug-free manual care to relieve pain by decreasing the pressure on the joints, muscles, and nerves of the spine and pelvis. Chiropractors are trained to provide treatment and up-to-date information tailored to meet the specific needs of women during all stages of pregnancy. Take care and listen to your body and the stork will do the rest.

