



Lower Back Pain and Pregnancy

Approximately 50% of all pregnant women experience lower back pain sometime during pregnancy. This back pain may result in lost days from work, a general lowering of the quality of life for the pregnant woman, as well as sleep disturbances. It most commonly shows up after the 6th month and may last up to six months after delivery.

Several changes occur during pregnancy that contribute to lower back pain:

- As abdominal muscles are stretched and tone is diminished, they lose their ability to contribute to a neutral posture.
- Extra weight carried in front of the body shift the center of gravity forward, putting more strain on the back.
- Production of the hormone relaxin increases 10-fold in pregnancy. This hormone creates joint laxity, and allows the baby to pass through the birth canal. Relaxin also contributes to causing inflammation and pain in other joints of the body.

Treatment

Your physician can advise you about ways to minimize the discomfort of lower back pain associated with pregnancy. Some other suggestions include:

- Be more conscious of your posture. Try to keep your spine in a neutral position, neither sway backed nor flat.
- Wear flat or low heeled and well supported shoes to reduce the stress on your spine
- If you must stand for long periods of time, take frequent breaks, or if you can't do that, place one foot on a low stool, alternating your feet
- If your job requires sitting, you can reduce the stress on your lower back by putting one foot on a low stool

How to Minimize Discomfort

- Your physician may prescribe strengthening and flexibility exercises to reduce lower back pain
- Swimming is an excellent way to help keep fit in pregnancy while relieving stress on your back
- Place a pillow under your knees to reduce the pressure on your back. Lying on your side with a pillow between your knees may also reduce the pressure

For more information on how to maintain a healthy back or general health and wellness information be sure to visit www.myuch.com.

