

Topic of the Week

WE CARE ABOUT YOUR HEALTH

Chiropractic Delivers a More Comfortable Pregnancy

Presented by: **Dr. Kolbi Brost**

Pregnancy is a wonderful and rewarding experience for most women. However, the female body experiences a number of dramatic physical changes during pregnancy that can lead to considerable discomfort.

Your chiropractor wants you to know how beneficial chiropractic treatments can be to help soothe the aches and pains involved in pregnancy, so you can get back to focusing on what a truly wonderful miracle it is.

There are a number of common symptoms that occur through the various stages. Pregnancy is usually divided chronologically into trimesters.

The First Trimester

From conception to the beginning of the fourth month, most pregnancy symptoms relate to the hormonal cascade that occurs in the expectant mom's body. During the first trimester, it's usual for her to suffer morning sickness, water retention and/or bloating. For some women, the fluctuating hormones may trigger headaches.



In addition to the biochemical changes, there is often a high degree of emotional stress associated with such a life-changing event. Many women report mood swings and this can result in more muscle tension. Since taking medication is not recommended for pregnant or lactating women, chiropractic is an excellent pain relief alternative. Research proves chiropractic to be a safe and effective method for alleviating some of the symptoms that appear during the first trimester of pregnancy.^{1,2}

The Second Trimester

This is the phase where the greatest weight gain occurs.³ With the abdominal region accumulating most of the extra pounds, the center of gravity for a pregnant woman shifts forward. This places increased postural stress on the muscles of the lower back and pelvis, often causing the lumbar spine to increase its natural arch. This may increase pain and soreness. Recent evidence reveals up to 69% of pregnant women suffer from low back pain.⁴

Fortunately, chiropractic adjustments are excellent for pregnant patients with lower back problems.^{5,6,7}

Exercise of the Week

Pelvic Stabilization in Reverse Bridge Position with Hamstring Curls

Difficulty: Easy to Moderate

(Consult your chiropractor before starting this or any other exercise.)

Start: Lie on back, lower legs resting on ball, knees straight. Hands can rest on hips with elbows touching floor. Press down into ball with legs, lifting hips until entire body is in straight position, feet to shoulders. Stabilize with stomach tucked in and hold.

Exercise: Roll ball toward buttocks using both feet. As ball comes closer to buttocks, hips should keep still. Curl legs to 90 degrees and hold for 2 counts. Return to start position; maintain a tight abdomen throughout. Repeat 5-10 times.



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The Third Trimester

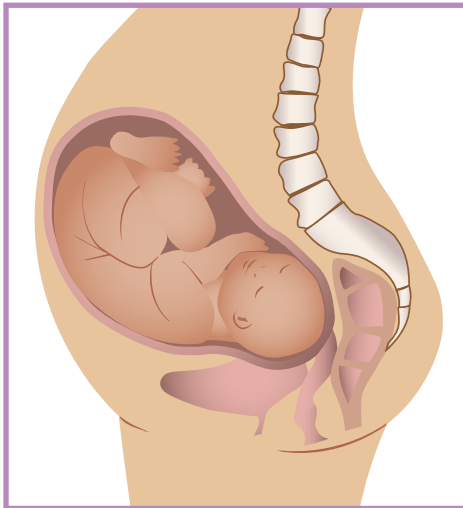
Given the rapid weight gain experienced during the second trimester will be carried for the final three months, the third trimester is usually the time when most musculoskeletal symptoms occur. Lower back pain becomes more common during this time. A large number of these cases are due to sacroiliac joint irritation. In one study, seven out of ten women reported significant benefit from having spinal manipulation in this area to alleviate their lower back pain.⁸

Not only are postural changes more of a problem during this phase, a pregnant woman's breasts enlarge in preparation for feeding the newborn. As a result, shoulders tend to round forward, and the upper back area may feel stress and strain.

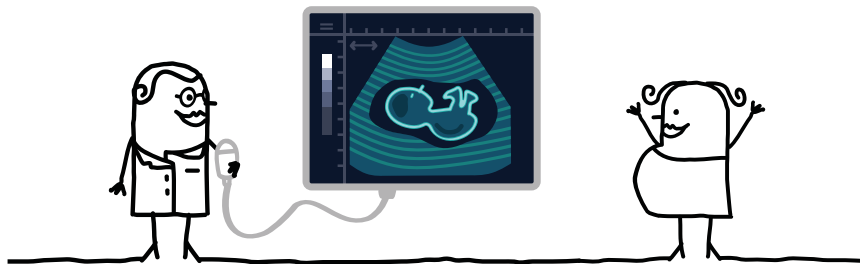
Further hormonal changes also occur during the third trimester. The hormone *relaxin* is released into the pregnant mom's bloodstream to help promote greater flexibility of the ligaments and tendons surrounding the joints. This is a crucial function when she undergoes delivery. However, this function can also create dysfunction. As ligaments loosen, joints become more prone to subluxate. With some of the greatest mechanical loads being placed on the pelvis just before birth, the sacroiliac joints in the pelvic area can easily shift. Corrective adjustment from a chiropractor is all that a pregnant woman needs to re-establish proper movement and function in the pelvis and joints.⁹

Can Chiropractors Help with Breech Babies?

A baby is considered to be in breech position when his or her feet are in position to emerge first during delivery. This poses a greater risk for both mother and child. Chiropractors may be able to remedy this situation. Several years ago, Dr. Larry Webster, a chiropractor, developed a technique to help reposition babies in utero with only a few minor adjustments. The *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics* reported an 82% success rate of babies turning head-down when doctors of chiropractic used the Webster Technique.¹⁰



Chiropractic care, delivered at any stage of pregnancy, can lead to reduced stress and strain on joints, nerves and muscles. The final product is a happy and healthier mom-to-be.



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Quote of the Week

"Feeling fat lasts nine months but the joy of becoming a mom lasts forever."

- Nikki Dalton

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