

12 ways to treat back pain during pregnancy



Back Pain During Pregnancy is a common condition that affects many expectant mothers. Pregnant women may experience pain that can be localized or radiate to the buttocks, thighs, and legs, causing sciatica-like symptoms.

This discomfort may be constant, worsen with activity, disrupt sleep, or reduce overall body function. While these symptoms typically resolve on their own after delivery, some types of pain may persist as chronic conditions. Women with a history of back problems are usually at higher risk of experiencing back pain during pregnancy.

The causes of this pain can vary, including hormonal changes, weight gain, and shifts in posture. Understanding the nature of **back pain during pregnancy** is crucial for expectant mothers to seek appropriate care and relief.

Back Pain in Pregnancy

During pregnancy, natural anatomical changes in the body cause issues for the musculoskeletal system, especially in the lower body. Back pain and pelvic pain usually start between the fifth and seventh month of pregnancy. A small percentage of women may experience such pain as early as 4 to 16 weeks. The condition of the lumbar spine and pelvic pain during pregnancy usually leads to back pain in pregnant women:

- The lumbar spine experiences an increased reverse C-shaped curvature, which puts extra pressure on the joints, muscles, ligaments, and discs of the back.
- The psoas muscle in the pelvis, which stabilizes the spine and aids in hip and leg movements, shortens due to the C-shaped condition, exacerbating back pain symptoms.

Symptoms of Back Pain in Pregnancy

Back pain during pregnancy is generally located in the upper back and center of the back and may simultaneously spread to the pregnant woman's calf or leg. Posterior pelvic pain (in the back of the pelvis) is four times more common than back pain in pregnancy. This pain is deep and is felt below the waistline, on one or both sides, or across the tailbone.





Causes of Back Pain in Early Pregnancy

The back pain you experience during pregnancy has many factors. For some women, this pain is actually an early sign of pregnancy. If you're experiencing back pain in the first trimester, it may be due to the following reasons:

1. **Increased hormone levels:** During pregnancy, the body secretes hormones that help soften ligaments and pelvic joints, which is important for delivering your baby in late pregnancy. However, hormones don't just secrete in the uterus and pelvis area but move throughout your body and affect all your joints. In the first trimester of pregnancy, this softening of muscles can directly affect your back, and you'll often feel it as pain.
2. **Stress:** Stress can generally be a factor in back pain, whether you're pregnant or not. Stress causes increased pain and muscle stiffness, especially in areas of the body that are weaker.

Causes of Back Pain in the Second and Third Trimesters

1. **Shift in center of gravity:** As your belly grows larger, your center of gravity shifts forward. This can lead to changes in you that ultimately affect how you sit, stand, move, and sleep. Poor posture, standing for long periods, and bending can all cause or exacerbate back pain.
2. **Weight gain:** Your back also has to support the weight of your growing child, which can strain muscles. Now add poor body posture and maternal weight gain to this combination; thus, back pain is inevitable. Women who are overweight or had back pain before becoming pregnant are at higher risk for back pain during their pregnancy.

Diagnosis of Back Pain in Pregnancy

Diagnosis of back pain during pregnancy is based on reviewing the patient's medical history, physical examinations, and possibly an MRI. No X-ray or CT scan imaging tests are performed as the radiation used in these methods is harmful to the fetus and mother.

Treatment of Back Pain in Pregnancy

1. **Be mindful of your body position when sitting:** Sitting in a chair all day puts more pressure on your spine than anything else. At home and work, make sure to use chairs with straight backs, defined armrests, and firm cushions. Also, use a footrest to elevate your feet and don't cross your legs; this causes your pelvis to tilt forward and puts stress on your muscles.



2. **Rest:** Walk or stand and do stretching exercises at least once an hour. Prolonged sitting and standing can worsen your back pain. If your job requires you to stand on your feet, try placing one foot on a low stool to take some pressure off your lower back.
3. **Avoid lifting heavy objects:** If you must lift heavy objects, do it slowly. Stand firmly in place, then bend at the knees (put weight on your knees), not on your back; finally lift the object with your hands and feet instead of using your back.
4. **Watch your weight:** Extra weight means extra pressure on joints and the spine.
5. **Wear appropriate shoes:** Experts recommend wearing shoes with a 5 cm heel instead of high heels or flat shoes.
6. **Don't overstretch:** Use a stable low-height stool to pick up items from high places to avoid extra strain.
7. **Think happy thoughts:** A calm mind reduces stress and consequently back pain. You can also use pregnancy yoga to increase relaxation for you and your fetus.
8. **Physical therapy, yoga, exercise (walking, cycling, swimming):** All these exercises are considered safe for most pregnant women; you can do them for 20 to 45 minutes three to five days a week. If you're pregnant, you should be careful not to exercise to exhaustion.



- 9. Strengthen abdominal muscles:** To strengthen your abdominal muscles, do pelvic exercises which support your back as well. Or you can sit on an exercise ball and rock yourself forward and backward.



- 10. Use hot and cold compresses:** Relieve muscle pain by using cold compresses followed by hot compresses at 15-minute intervals. Take a hot shower; adjust the showerhead so that water sprays with pressure onto your back for a massage.
- 11. Get a massage:** You can visit a masseuse who knows you're pregnant and is trained in pregnancy massage after the first trimester.
- 12. Wear appropriate maternity clothes:** You can wear some clothing designed specifically for maternity that helps combat back pain during pregnancy.
 - Maternity belly bands
 - Abdominal belts

- Pregnancy supporters
- Maternity support clothing





Exercises for Pregnancy Back Pain

Some exercises can help reduce your back pain during pregnancy; however if you encounter any problems while doing any movements mentioned here consult your doctor immediately.

1. **Cat/Cow Movement**
2. **Gentle Rotation**
3. **Side Stretches**
4. **Shell Exercise**
5. **Child's Pose**



(Details for each exercise would follow here)

Tips for Preventing Back Pain in Pregnancy

There are several effective ways to prevent back pain during pregnancy:

- Strengthening back muscles with appropriate pregnancy exercises
- Maintaining appropriate weight throughout pregnancy
- Performing gentle exercises regularly with doctor's approval
- Wearing appropriate orthopedic shoes
- Avoiding prolonged standing
- Avoiding lifting heavy objects
- Lifting objects using proper body posture by utilizing legs instead of back
- Practicing good body posture
- Avoiding sleeping on your stomach

For more detailed information on managing pregnancy-related discomforts including back pain visit our [knowledge center](#). Remember while back pain is common during pregnancy it's essential to listen to your body; consult with your healthcare provider if you experience severe or persistent pain. Using a [seat cushion](#) can also provide additional support and comfort throughout your pregnancy journey. If there are any specific adjustments you'd like me to make or additional information you'd like included or clarified further, please let me know!