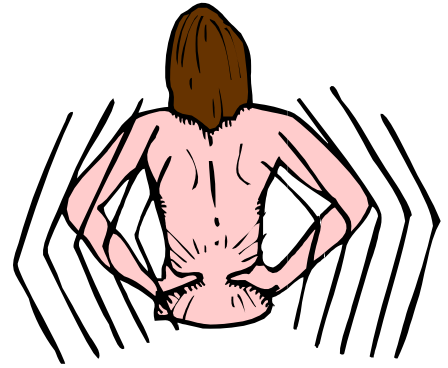


# ***BACK PAIN DURING PREGNANCY***



## **Why do I have back pain?**

Studies estimate that over 50% of women experience low back pain during their pregnancy. This pain is primarily due to the increase in body weight that naturally occurs while carrying a child, particularly in the abdominal region. This extra weight puts stress on the body, especially the low back. Gravity pulls this weight downward, causing an exaggeration of the curve in your low back. Also, during pregnancy, the hips begin to expand and the connective tissues soften, to accommodate the expansion of the birth canal. This "loosening" of the hips can contribute dramatically to the pain you are experiencing. Even slight changes in these things can put a major strain on your low back and can leave you feeling miserable.

## **How can I minimize the discomfort?**

Back strengthening exercises are usually safe for you and can improve the pain if performed correctly.

Swimming is an excellent way to keep fit and relieve the stress on your back from the extra weight of the pregnancy.

If you have to lift something, lift with your legs and not your back. Whenever possible, get assistance in lifting objects.

If you need to carry something, carrying two smaller objects, one in either hand, may be easier to handle than to carry one large item.

If you sleep on your back, place a pillow under your knees. Lying on your side with a pillow between your knees helps reduce pressure on the back.

Supportive garments recommended by your provider may be used.

Use a heating pad or warm bath to relieve pain.

Don't stand for long periods of time.

Consider using a "Dr. Schol's" insole arch for pregnant women that may help the pain.

Sleep on a good firm mattress and while sitting you may want to use a small pillow for support.

A pregnancy massage therapist may help relieve your pain. Ask your provider for that referral.

## **Cautions to consider**

Never use anti-inflammatories during pregnancy (ie: advil, ibuprofen, etc.)

Pain may be related to kidney or bladder infection. If pain persists, and you have flank tenderness, call your provider.

Pain may be related to contractions or preterm labor. If pain persists, call your provider.