

The Wellness Express™



Jump on the train to good health

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The Importance of Prenatal Chiropractic Care

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Introduction

Prenatal chiropractic care, or chiropractic care for pregnant women, is an important and frequently used service provided by chiropractors. All chiropractors are trained to manage the unique set of musculoskeletal symptoms that arise during pregnancy and to improve the quality of life of the person expecting. Some chiropractors even specialize in this discipline and provide personalized care to women both during and after their pregnancy. The American Pregnancy Association states that chiropractic treatment during pregnancy by a chiropractor trained to work with expecting women is safe.¹ In this edition of the Wellness Express we will examine the importance of prenatal chiropractic care for the health and well-being of expecting mothers.

Chiropractic Care During Pregnancy

Chiropractic, as a profession, has a long history of caring for pregnant women and this treatment approach has been adopted by more and more women as the interest in natural birthing methods increases. The weight increase and changing body shape associated with pregnancy cause a shift in expecting mothers' center of gravity, resulting in certain postural compensations and structural changes that may lead to spinal and pelvic misalignment. Ligament

laxity is another factor that may increase joint instability in pregnant women - especially in the spine and pelvis - leading to pain. According to a 2001 study published in the journal *Acta Obstetrica et Gynecologica Scandinavica*, there is a clear relationship between asymmetric laxity of the sacroiliac, or SI, joints and pregnancy-related pelvic pain.² Chiropractic care can help address these common causes of pregnancy-related pain or discomfort.

Reasons to Seek Chiropractic Prenatal Care

Chiropractic pregnancy experts use special equipment, including tables, that adjust for a pregnant woman's body as well as techniques that minimize or eliminate pressure on the abdomen. Prenatal chiropractic specialists provide well-rounded care, including appropriate adjustments and soft tissue work and the prescription of a stretching routine, or other exercises to help reduce pregnancy-related discomfort. A 2006 study published in the *Journal of Midwifery & Women's Health* reports that chiropractic care is a safe and effective way to reduce the intensity of low back pain in pregnant women.³ Another study, published in 2008 in the *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics*, states that chiropractic care improves outcomes in women who have pregnancy-related low back pain.⁴

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Exercise of the Week

Reverse Crunch with Exercise Ball plus Upper Body Crunch

Difficulty: Moderate

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

Start: Lie on back with arms relaxed overhead. Position ball behind legs so it can be lifted off floor with hamstrings/adductors

Exercise: Lift ball just off floor. Pull stomach inward while inhaling. As you exhale, simultaneously bring knees up toward chest and try to reach both hands to top of ball. Pause at top, then slowly return to starting position.

Repeat 10-15 times.



Benefits of Prenatal Chiropractic Care

Women receiving prenatal chiropractic care may experience numerous potential health benefits, including decreased back pain, neck pain and pain or discomfort in other joints, reduced nausea and an all-around healthier pregnancy. Chiropractic spinal manipulative therapy and other supporting therapies may also help treat headaches during pregnancy. According to a 2009 study published in the journal *Complementary Therapies in Clinical Practice*, chiropractic care is both safe and effective for patients with pregnancy-related headaches.⁵

Your chiropractor is a health coach who can counsel you on the benefits of various lifestyle choices, especially exercise, and how these choices affect your pregnancy. Women who exercise during pregnancy, notes a 2007 review article published in the *Journal of Chiropractic Medicine*, have more energy, achieve more restful sleep and manage stress more effectively.⁶ This article also notes that women who exercise during pregnancy experience shorter, easier labors, fewer cesarean deliveries and a faster recovery after giving birth. Your chiropractor can help you decide on an exercise routine that is most appropriate for you during your pregnancy.



Postnatal Chiropractic Care

Receiving postnatal chiropractic care is an important health action for new mothers. Postnatal chiropractic care may be helpful in speeding post-birth healing and recovery, improving emotional well-being, restoring pelvic and spinal alignment and ensuring a swift transition to breastfeeding by improving the integrity of mid-back structures.



Speak with your Chiropractor

Chiropractic pregnancy care is a healthcare approach that supports your body's structure and function in a natural way. Speak with your chiropractor to see how you and your developing baby may benefit from chiropractic pregnancy care.

Quote to Inspire

**"Healthy bodies
make healthy
babies so
you have
nothing to lose!"**

Heidi Murkoff

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