

## CHIROPRACTIC CARE FOR PREGNANCY

Approximately 50-85% of pregnant women will experience back pain, with many suffering from severe discomfort that impacts their activities of daily living. Pregnancy-related back pain can be multi-factorial and rarely only has one cause. Back pain, wrist pain and leg cramps are the most common complaints reported.

**Causes:** The average healthy weight gain is approximately 30 lbs, most of which is around the abdomen adding a significant frontal load. The added weight puts stress on the back, hips, knees and feet/ankles. Additional weight can lead to altered posture and biomechanics as we change the way we sleep, stand, and move during pregnancy. As the baby grows and the uterus expands, the abdominal muscles also stretch and lose their ability to support as they did. The change in posture, shifting forward, may cause pain and discomfort specifically in the lower back.

During the third trimester, levels of the hormone “relaxin” increase and contribute to the loosening of joints in order for the pelvis to accommodate for enlarged uterus, the baby and later birth. However, the loosening of joints can decrease joint stability and further alter posture. Other structures including musculature may be taxed, resulting in a predisposition to pain and injury. This may result in back pain.

**Symptoms:** Unwanted pregnancy symptoms may include neck/back/pelvic pain, aching legs and buttocks, peripheral swelling, sciatica, shooting pain in the legs and feet, fatigue and low energy, night-time muscle spasms, carpal tunnel syndrome, DeQuervain’s tenosynovitis, and sleep disturbances due to back pain.

### How our experts can help:

Studies have shown that manual therapy, including chiropractic, can help decrease pain in pregnancy and labour. Chiropractors can provide safe, effective and drug-free conservative care to relieve pain and improve function before, during and after pregnancy. As part of a comprehensive plan of management, chiropractic treatment can help manage quicker recovery and address post-natal biomechanical complaints and rehabilitation. The treatment options may include:

- Patient education and reassurance
- Manipulation or mobilization of associated joints
- Soft tissue therapy of relevant musculature
- Modalities including electrical stimulation and acupuncture etc.
- Rehabilitation and exercises
- Ergonomic and lifestyle changes
- Referral and co-management if required

\* As supported by medical research, chiropractic is a safe form of treatment for pregnant women. Throughout pregnancy, chiropractic techniques are adapted for belly growth and appropriately modified using props like pregnancy pillows and customized tables.