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Backache in pregnancy

During pregnancy, the ligaments in your body naturally become softer and stretch to prepare you for labour. This can put a strain on the joints of your lower back and pelvis, which can cause backache.



Avoiding backache in pregnancy

There are several things you can do to help prevent back pain from happening, and to help you cope with an aching back if it does occur.

The tips listed here can help you to protect your back – try to remember them every day:

- avoid lifting heavy objects
- bend your knees and keep your back straight when lifting or picking up something from the floor
- move your feet when turning round to avoid twisting your spine
- wear flat shoes as these allow your weight to be evenly distributed
- work at a surface high enough to prevent you stooping
- try to balance the weight between two bags when carrying shopping
- sit with your back straight and well supported
- make sure you get enough rest, particularly later in pregnancy

A firm mattress can also help to prevent and relieve backache. If your mattress is too soft, put a piece of hardboard under it to make it firmer. Massage can also help.

Exercises to ease backache in pregnancy

The gentle exercise below helps to strengthen stomach (abdominal)



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muscles and this can ease backache in pregnancy:

- start in a box position (on all fours) with knees under hips, hands under shoulders, with fingers facing forwards and abdominals lifted to keep your back straight
- pull in your stomach muscles and raise your back up towards the ceiling, curling your trunk and allowing your head to relax gently forward – don't let your elbows lock
- hold for a few seconds then slowly return to the box position
- take care not to hollow your back – it should always return to a straight, neutral position
- do this slowly and rhythmically 10 times, making your muscles work hard and moving your back carefully
- only move your back as far as you can comfortably

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) advises that exercising in water, massage therapy, and group or individual back care classes might help to ease back pain in pregnancy.

Some local swimming pools provide aquanatal classes (gentle exercise classes in water, especially for pregnant women) with qualified instructors. Ask at your local leisure centre. Being in water will support your increasing weight.

When to get help for backache in pregnancy

If your backache is very painful, ask your doctor to refer you to an obstetric physiotherapist at your hospital. They can give you advice and may suggest some helpful exercises.

Get tips on [preventing back pain at work](#).

Find out about more [common problems in pregnancy](#), including [pelvic joint pain](#).

Healthtalk.org has interviews with women talking about their [experiences of pelvic pain in pregnancy](#) and how they coped.

Antenatal classes

Find out why antenatal classes are important, what to do on labour day and more.

Media last reviewed: 08/07/2015

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Exercises for back pain

Exercises for back pain, including advice on staying active, creating an exercise programme and how manual therapy can help



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Being very overweight can cause problems in pregnancy. Find out the risks and what you can do

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Pregnancy and parenting forum



Not convinced by gender scan at 16 weeks...

Hi I had a gender scan done at 16 weeks I was told I was having a girl not...

8 replies



idk what to do

hi ladies , i still havent started my period since december & i get cramps like...

1 reply



Help

Hi could I have some advice please. I started the pill in the middle of a cycle...

5 replies



Unsure and scared

Hi all. Am currently 39 weeks + 2 with first baby, a little boy. Yesterday I...

2 replies



But I used a condom correctly

My partner and I use condoms correctly but for the past week I have been

1 reply

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