

If you are struggling with pain and not moving easily, the Doctors may consider inducing labour but only if your body and baby are ready and the possible risks of being induced are considered carefully.

There is no evidence that caesarian section is of benefit for women with pelvic pain. Very rarely, where hip movements are severely restricted, caesarean section may be necessary.

During labour, good posture is important, and you should follow the antenatal advice in this leaflet, or from your Physiotherapist, on sitting, lying and walking. Your partner can help to remind you, especially if you have an epidural. Your choice of pain relief is unchanged – there is no evidence for or against epidurals in women with pelvic pain.

After your baby is born

Usually the pelvic pain settles once the baby is delivered. The effect of the pregnancy hormones begins to wear off, and your posture returns to normal. Good pain relief (which is safe with breastfeeding) and gradual mobilisation are essential.

If bed rest is required, precautions may be taken to prevent blood clots. The following suggestions may help to ease the pain, enabling you to look after your new baby more easily.

Do

- Find a comfortable position for feeding your baby, with your back well supported
- Carry the car seat, when the baby is in it, in front of you

- Continue to do your pelvic floor and tummy exercises several times a day
- Be aware that the pelvic pain may seem worse just before a period
- Change the baby's nappy on a high surface, not on the floor
- Avoid carrying a baby bath when it is full of water
- Avoid heavy lifting
- Follow the advice on this leaflet for at least six weeks after your baby is born or until the pain subsides. If you are finding it difficult to cope because of the pain, please contact your Physiotherapist, Midwife or GP.

Sirona care & health

For more information / Accessibility

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This leaflet can be provided in other formats and languages, please contact us for more information.

e: sirona.hello@nhs.net

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Pelvic Joint Pain in Pregnancy

Physiotherapy Service
Information Leaflet

Service provided by

Sirona care & health

What is pelvic pain?

Many women experience backache at some time during their pregnancy. In some women it may become increasingly painful, particularly around the front or back of the pelvis or lower back. This is called pelvic joint pain.

Why might you have pelvic pain?

When you become pregnant, hormones are released into your bloodstream. This affects your ligaments making them looser and the joints less stable. The increased movement in these pelvic joints allows more room for the baby to pass through the pelvis during the birth.

What can you do about it?

It can affect your everyday life and also cause disturbed sleep, especially when turning over. It is important to pay particular attention to the way you sit, stand or sleep, as poor posture leads to more strain on the ligaments and joints, increasing your discomfort.

Do

- Sit on a firm chair
- Placed a rolled-up towel in the small of your back
- Sit up straight, well supported
- Climb the stairs one at a time
- Sit down to get dressed and undressed
- Wear comfortable, supportive, flat shoes
- Roll in and out of bed
- Iron for short periods only or sit down to iron if you can.

Don't

- Cross your legs
- Sit on the floor
- Sit twisted
- Sit or stand for long periods

Avoid whenever possible

- Lifting heavy objects
- Pushing a loaded shopping trolley
- Lifting shopping out of a trolley
- Using a vacuum cleaner
- Carrying heavy, wet washing or pegging it out

Sex

Find a comfortable position, which allows you to keep your legs closer together; for example, kneeling on all floors (or lying on your side) with your partner behind you.

Exercise and sport

Any activity which causes an increase in your pelvic joint pain should be avoided. Mild to moderate exercise is good for you and your growing baby.

However, you should not attempt intensive bouts of exercise or new types of sporting activities.

Avoid high impact exercise, such as running, racquet sports and aerobics. Walk with shorter strides than usual. Swimming may be beneficial but avoid breast stroke leg kick.

Rest

It is important when pregnant to allow recovery time from the extra demands placed on your body. If you have pelvic joint pain you may need to rest more frequently.

Toddlers

You may have a toddler to care for so it is important to follow the advice above and remember:

- Try not to lift toddlers too often and do not carry the child on one hip
- Let the cot side down to put the child to bed or pick it up
- Do not lift toddlers in and out of shopping trolleys
- Kneel to bath your child
- Keep the child close to you when putting it in a car seat
- Let family and friends help with chores
- Do not change toddlers on the floor.

Labour and delivery

As with all mothers in labour, every attempt will be made to allow you to move around freely and to adopt positions that are comfortable for you. Some positions, such as kneeling, may ease your symptoms. These can be discussed with your Midwife and Physiotherapist before you go into labour and may be put in your birth plan.

However, it may be necessary to alter your chosen position in labour for certain procedures or to ensure the well-being of you and your baby. The Midwife will always discuss any such changes with you first.

The Doctors' viewpoint

For the vast majority of women with pelvic, joint and ligament pain, natural onset of labour is recommended.