

## **BACK PAIN DURING PREGNANCY**

Back pain is extremely common during pregnancy. As the uterus enlarges, your center of gravity and your posture change. There is increasing strain on the back muscles. Weakness of the abdominal muscles results in loss of the normal support for your back and spine. Late in pregnancy, many women begin to lean backward as they walk or sit, leading to more strain on the back muscles.

The hormones of pregnancy also cause relaxation of the muscles and ligaments which keep the spine in proper alignment. This can aggravate the strain on your back, and it could make you more prone to injury with exercise.

To help prevent or ease back pain:

- Wear low-heeled (but not flat) shoes with good arch support
- Ask for help when lifting heavy objects
- When standing for long periods of time, place one foot on a short stool or box
- Don't bend over from the waist to pick things up – bend your knees and keep your back straight
- Sit in chairs with good back support, or use a small pillow behind the lower part of your back (this is especially helpful when driving or riding in cars)
- When sleeping, use one or two pillows between your legs for support and to avoid twisting of your spine
- Heat, ice packs, or massage may help to reduce the muscle spasms
- Tylenol may be used to help relieve pain

Special exercises are available to help ease back pain. Please call our office for illustrated information regarding these exercises. If the back pain persists, back braces or special maternity support belts may be beneficial. In some cases, physical therapy may be required.