

Pregnancy



Background

A woman's body undergoes major physiological, structural and emotional changes during pregnancy.

Some women experience muscle and joint pain. Stress, anxiety, depression and fatigue can also be problematic for pregnant women.

Pregnancy-related low back and pelvic pain has an impact on daily life for many women. A recent study has shown this type of pain is prevalent in 72% of pregnant women.

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Treatment

REGISTERED MASSAGE THERAPISTS MAY HELP:

- reduce general muscle tension and pain
- decrease stress, depression and anxiety
- improve mood and sleep
- decrease back and pelvic pain
- reduce headaches
- manage symptoms of edema & sciatica

Research:

Pregnant women benefit from massage therapy

Twenty-six pregnant women were assigned to a massage therapy or a relaxation therapy group for 5 weeks. Only the massage therapy group reported reduced anxiety, improved mood, better sleep and less back pain by the last day of the study. In addition, urinary stress hormone levels decreased for the massage therapy group with fewer complications during labour and their infants had fewer postnatal complications.

(Field T, et al., *J Psychosom Obstet Gynaecol*. 1999 Mar;20(1):31-8)

Massage therapy effects on pregnant women with depression

Eighty-four pregnant women with depression were recruited during the second trimester of pregnancy and randomly assigned to a massage therapy group, a progressive muscle relaxation group or a control group that received standard prenatal care alone. Immediately after the massage therapy sessions, on the first and last days of the 16-week period, the women reported lower levels of anxiety and depressed mood and less leg and back pain. The data suggest that depressed pregnant women and their offspring can benefit from massage therapy. (Field T, Diego MA, et. al., *J Psychosom Obstet Gynaecol*. 2004 Jun;25(2):115-22.)

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