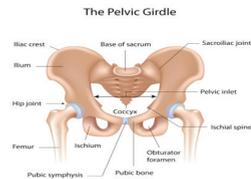


Common problems during pregnancy can be pelvic girdle pain, back pain and stress urinary incontinence. These symptoms often occur due to hormonal changes and the ever-increasing weight of your baby & uterus.



Back Care Tips

- Avoid lifting heavy or awkward objects. If lifting, bend your knees and keep the object close to you.
- Be careful of awkward movements such as reaching, twisting, hoovering or pushing a shopping trolley.
- Avoid standing on one leg when getting dressed – sit down where possible.
- Try to avoid carrying a toddler on one hip.
- To get up from lying bend the knees & roll onto one side.
- If turning over is uncomfortable, move from side lying to a sitting position over the side of the bed, then transfer pillows to the bottom of the bed and lower onto your side.
- Sleep in a comfortable position on your side with pillows to support you, including under your bump. Either use the same pillow or another to support the bent knee of your upper leg.

Pelvic Pain Advice

- Listen to your body, pace your activities and as far as possible avoid the movements that increase the symptoms e.g. stretching your hips, going up and down stairs.
- Have frequent changes of position; avoid sitting for too long or walking too far.
- Avoid lifting and carrying as much as possible.
- Get in and out of the car, bed or bath by sitting down first then moving your legs carefully avoiding separating your legs.
- Apply a small ice pack over the joint for 5-10 minutes.
- Avoid standing on 1 leg, sit down to get dressed.
- A maternity or pelvis support is often helpful.
- Take care of your pelvis during labour. Discuss your birth plan with your midwife and take care not to part your legs further than is comfortable.

Exercising at moderate levels during pregnancy helps to maintain your levels of fitness and makes you feel good. It can help to keep your weight within a healthy range, improve your posture, balance and co-ordination, increase your stamina and help your body to prepare for labour and delivery. It is important to remember that the aim of exercise during pregnancy is to stay fit rather than to reach the peak of fitness. Always listen to your body and take notice of it, stop if you feel uncomfortable, too hot, tired, short of breath or unwell.



Top Tips	Recommended Types of Exercise
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration • Treat new types of exercise with caution • Avoid contact sports • Avoid high impact activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walking • Swimming – avoiding breast-stroke if you have pelvic pain • Pilates • Yoga • Specific antenatal exercise classes

Pelvic Floor Exercises

- Sit or lie comfortably with your knees slightly apart.
- Squeeze and lift the muscle around the back passage as if you were trying to stop wind.
- Then squeeze and lift the muscle around the front passage as if trying to slow the flow of urine.
- You should feel the muscle move slightly as if it is being drawn up inside.
- No one should be able to see that you are doing these exercises, so your buttocks, tummy or legs should not be moving as you squeeze your pelvic floor. Remember to breathe!
- Each time you do your pelvic floor exercises do some fast squeezes and some squeezes that you hold. Start with 5x5 second slow squeezes and 5 fast squeezes 3 times a day.

Exercise Tips

- You should get into the habit of doing the exercises by linking them to everyday activities, for example after emptying your bladder or when making a hot drink.
- Squeeze your pelvic floor muscles each time you cough, sneeze or lift anything heavy.
- Practice the exercises sitting, standing and lying. It is often easier to begin with lying but altering the position will improve the muscle strength.
- You must persevere; it will take between 6-12 weeks for the muscles to strengthen. These exercises should be continued as a life commitment

Your tummy muscles will stretch as your baby grows, it is important therefore to exercise these muscles to keep them strong. They will provide support for your back and your baby and encourage good posture. The best exercises for this are:

Abdominal Contraction

Place your hand on the lower part of your tummy under your bump.

Breathe in through your nose.

As you breathe out, gently draw in your lower tummy away from your hand towards your back, then relax. Repeat x5.

To progress, hold the contractions gradually increasing the time to 10 seconds & repeat x 10, several times a day.

It is important to also do this exercise during the day e.g. when vacuuming, shopping, getting up from a chair. Breathe normally whilst holding the contraction.



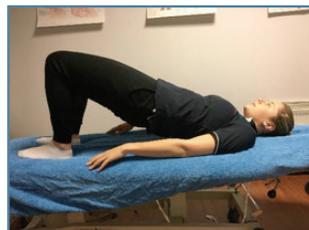
Cat stretch: raise your back, arching it toward the ceiling then return and arch in opposite direction.



Pelvic Tilts: While lying on your back, use your stomach muscles to press your back into the floor.



Clam: While lying on your side with your knees bent and your ankles together, slowly lift up the top of the knee, while keeping feet together.



Bridge: While lying on your back, tighten your lower abdominals, squeeze your buttocks & lift.



Sitting tilts: While sitting on an exercise ball, slowly tilt your pelvis to arch and then flatten your lower back.

If you become breathless, light headed or nauseas while lying on your back, avoid exercises in this position.

Healthy Bowels

There are many different factors that influence the way in which our bowels work and there are many variations in "normal" both between individuals and in the same individual at different times. Food takes between 1 to 3 days to pass through the gut as nutrients are absorbed by the intestines. The stools, or waste products, are stored in the rectum until it is convenient to pass them. The stool should be soft and sausage shaped. It is normal to open your bowels anything from 3 times a day to 3 times in a week. Many factors can influence how well the bowels work, these include your diet, activity levels, having a suitable place to open the bowels, some medications, certain illnesses, pregnancy and the time of your menstruation cycle.

To Maintain a Healthy Bowel:

- Eat a healthy diet including 5 portions of fruit or vegetables a day.
- Take regular exercise.
- Drink approximately 3 pints of fluid a day.
- Train your bowel into regular habits.

It is important to seek medical advice if you have infective diarrhea, blood or mucus in the stool, rectal bleeding or any changes in bowel habit.



Advice to Relieve Constipation

- Avoid putting off opening your bowels. The longer the stool stays stored in your rectum, the harder it becomes.
- Drink plenty of fluids, ideally water, as this will help to soften your stools.
- Try going to the toilet 30 minutes after eating breakfast. This is when your body has a natural reflex to have a bowel movement. If nothing happens within 10 minutes, try again later.
- Check that you are not on any medications which can cause constipation.
- Complete a food and drink diary to see if there is anything causing your constipation.
- Abdominal massage in gentle circular movements may help.
- Ensure you are in a good position when trying to open your bowels. Raise your knees by lifting your heels or by placing your feet on a foot stool. This improves the angle of the rectum which makes it easier to pass a stool. Keep your feet 1.5 – 2ft apart.
- Try saying the word "moo" or sound "sss" to encourage your tummy to bulge out rather than straining.

