

## Antenatal Physiotherapy Advice for Pelvic Girdle Pain

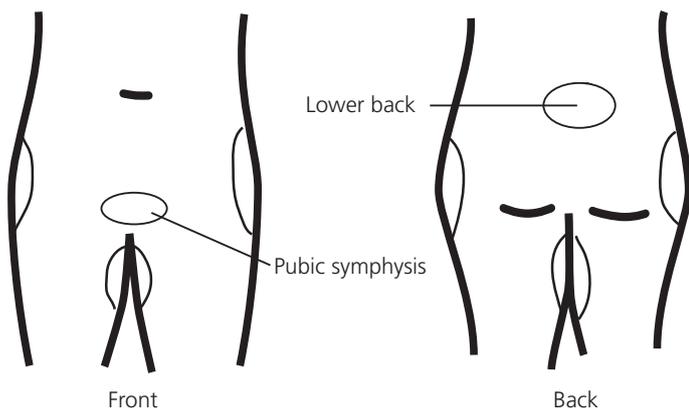
### Advice for Midwives and Healthcare Professionals

Please give out this leaflet as an aid to management and recovery. This simple advice is sometimes all that is needed to manage pelvic pain. However, if the pain persists, despite rest and management, then please refer directly to Women's Health Physiotherapy.

### What is pelvic girdle pain?

Pelvic girdle pain (PGP) is pain in the joints that make up the pelvis. This includes the symphysis pubis joint in the front, and the sacro-iliac joints at the back.

It can be due to softening of the ligaments that surround the joints allowing increased mobility of these joints and/or postural changes.



Pain can be felt in many different areas:

Around one in five pregnant women experience mild discomfort in the back or the pelvis. The simple advice in this booklet is sometimes all that is needed to manage your pain.

### General advice

- Ask for and accept help with household chores. Try doing smaller loads in the washing machine.
- Rest when you can, you may need to rest and sit down more often - pace yourself and your activities.
- Sit down to get dressed and undressed - avoid standing on one leg.
- Avoid too much standing to do tasks such as ironing and cooking.
- Try to keep your knees together when moving in and out of the car. A plastic bag on the seat may help you swivel.
- Take the stairs one at a time. Try going upstairs leading with your less painful leg, and downstairs lead with the more painful one. (Alternatively, you may find it easier to go downstairs leading the with less painful one.)
- Plan your day - bring everything you need downstairs in the morning.
- If possible consider using the internet for shopping rather than a long day on your feet.

### Sleeping

- When lying on your side, try to limit the twisting of your spine and pelvis by supporting the upper leg on pillows. Use as many pillows as you need to keep the upper leg parallel to the bed.



- When rolling/turning in bed, keep the knees pressed together and squeeze your buttocks and pelvic floor muscles as you turn.
- If you desire sexual intercourse, consider alternative positions, e.g. lying on your side or kneeling on all fours.

## Advice

- If you feel that your pelvis is very irritable, then try and sit in a firm and more supportive chair.



## Rest positions

- Sometimes joints can stiffen if sitting for prolonged periods without moving so try and combine these rest positions with gentle pelvic tilt movements.



- Try using a comfortable heat pack/hot water bottle on your lower back (always wrap these in a cover/towel – never apply directly to bare skin).

## Avoid actions that make the pain worse:

- ✗ Standing on one leg.
- ✗ Bending and twisting to lift or to carry a toddler on one hip.
- ✗ Crossing your legs when sitting in a chair.
- ✗ Sitting twisted.
- ✗ Sitting or standing for long periods.
- ✗ Lifting heavy weights (shopping, wet washing, vacuum cleaner, toddlers).
- ✗ Pushing heavy objects like supermarket trolleys.
- ✗ Pushing things with your feet to avoid bending.
- ✗ Carrying anything heavy in only one hand, or a bag on one shoulder.
- ✗ Too much walking and general activity.

The Trust cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the information given if the leaflet is not used by RD&E staff undertaking procedures at the RD&E hospitals.

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