

Back Pain During Pregnancy

Why does my back hurt?

The growing baby and uterus change the way your muscles support your weight during pregnancy. Muscles can become tired or strained, causing pain in the back, hips, and upper thighs.

Types of back pain:

- Upper back pain: pain in the middle of the back between the shoulder blades. This type of pain is usually caused by poor posture.
- Lower back pain: pain in the lower (lumbar) region of the back along the spine. It can be caused by changing weight in the abdomen and poor posture.
- Pelvic pain: pain in the thighs, groin, and buttocks. This pain is usually associated with poor posture while walking, bending, or lifting objects.
- Sciatica: pain that runs from the lower back down the legs. It often feels like shooting pain down the leg, and is usually limited to one side of the body. This is caused by the weight of the baby and uterus pressing against the sciatic nerve in your leg.

Tips for easing back pain:

- Good posture:
 - raise your chest and head, keeping shoulders aligned with ears
 - use your abdominal muscles to pull in your abdomen
 - keep your pelvis level
- Standing:
 - keep your legs slightly apart
 - Stand on a carpeted or cushioned floor; avoid hard flooring when possible
 - Wear comfortable shoes with padded soles and arch support
- Sitting:
 - Use lumbar support
 - Sit with knees slightly lower than hips
 - Do not cross your legs
 - Take deep breaths often
 - Watch your balance as you stand up
- Lying down
 - Lie on your side with your knees slightly bent
 - Use a pillow under your abdomen and between your knees for support
 - Try lying in a semireclining position (prop yourself up with pillows or use a recliner)
 - Roll onto your side to get out of bed to prevent strain on the lower back muscles
- Use proper body mechanics
 - Bending: put one foot slightly in front of the other and bend at knees and hips
 - Lifting: use your legs to lift, not your back
 - Carrying: do not carry objects resting on your hips, carry objects in front of you
- Stay active, exercise safely