

Celebrate Wellness!

(Motherhood)

Happy Birthday! Depending on your age, a birthday may be a time of introspection, celebration, or both. The “holiday” that marks a newborn’s first breath leads to many challenges and opportunities for mom and the family. How can you help mother and child embark on this adventure? Here are some facts and tips, courtesy of the Virginia Chiropractic Association.

As a pregnancy proceeds, mom’s body undergoes numerous changes. The most obvious changes involve body shape and posture, but a hormone called relaxin subtly makes ligaments a little looser. A good analogy is that the “rubber bands” (ligaments) that hold bones together become more easily stretched. Though this extra “play” between the bones will be useful upon delivery, it can also predispose mom to injury (knees, fallen arches, back pain). Since the feet are part of the shock-absorbing system that protects the knees, hips, and spine, and since chiropractic doctors are uniquely trained to help the human frame function at its best, it’s not surprising that some chiropractors will prescribe orthotics to support the feet to help limit pain during pregnancy and avoid permanent post-pregnancy fallen arches.

Here’s a self-care tip: Many pregnant women may benefit from certain forms of exercise. Though all people should consult a health care provider before embarking on an exercise program, and though pregnant women need to be especially cautious, water-based exercise may be a good aerobic outlet for the expectant mom. A 2006 study of 290 healthy, pregnant women indicated that a water-based exercise program was more effective than a land-based program for decreasing back and pelvic pain. Pregnant women can and should take steps to care for their changing bodies, and this and other studies suggest that the rewards of so doing may be significant.ⁱ

As the trimesters roll by, mom will tend to develop what’s known as a lordosis, an accentuated “dip” in her low back. Though the public and some doctors associate this posture with back pain, researchers suggest that lordosis alone may not cause low back pain.ⁱⁱ Another study suggests that imbalances in the joints at the base of the spine (sacroiliac joints) are highly correlated with pregnancy backache.ⁱⁱⁱ Doctors of chiropractic commonly work with fixated or “stuck” joints in the spine, and since symmetry of sacroiliac joint motion is so important in pregnancy back pain, these unique doctors’ skills become especially relevant for moms-to-be.

Numerous studies show chiropractic care’s value in decreasing pregnancy back pain.^{iv} When it comes time to deliver, a history of chiropractic care may be related to a smoother, less painful process -- and that’s a valuable consideration. A published study showed decreased incidence of painful back labor in women who had received regular chiropractic care.^v Though athletes, workers, and others appreciate the long-term benefits of regular trips to the chiropractor, there is no group more appreciative of those benefits than pregnant women.

Once mom has delivered, the family’s need for chiropractic care is over, right? Far from it. As with dental care, many choose chiropractic as part of healthy body maintenance; and there may be unexpected benefits. For parents of a child with colic, any relief is appreciated. A study out of Denmark showed^{vi} a significant positive response of colicky babies to chiropractic care, in comparison to what CNN called “dimethicone drops, the standard (and generally ineffective) treatment.”^{vii} Though some sources^{viii} are very cautious when it comes to finding a chiropractor competent to adjust an infant or child’s spine, most agree that a gentle touch is essential to pediatric chiropractic care.



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