

Prenatal Massage

Help for your pregnancy aches and pains when you most need it

What Is Prenatal Massage?

Expectant mothers experience unique physical and emotional changes that occur as a result of increased weight, shifting posture and adjusting hormone levels. While this can be a joyous period mums-to-be also endure heightened physical discomfort that ranges from muscular tension and headaches to pressure on the knees.

Prenatal massage is a natural touch therapy that shares many of the goals of regular massage – to relax tense muscles, ease sore spots, improve circulation and mobility and just make you feel good – that is tailored specifically to the needs of pregnant women and their changing bodies.

What Are The Benefits Of Prenatal Massage?

Regular massage therapy during pregnancy can relieve many of the aches and pains that are associated with pregnancy, such as back pain, headaches, leg cramps and abdominal pain.

A common complaint among pregnant women is sciatic nerve pain due to the uterus continuing to expand throughout the pregnancy which then increases pressure being placed on the sciatic nerve. This pressure can cause pain that begins in the buttocks and can radiate down the leg. As trained therapists we can work on this area to reduce the pain associated with the sciatic nerve.

Prenatal massage can also help to increase and improve circulation in the body, this in turn can aid in the reduction of leg cramps that many pregnant women experience; particularly at night.

Prenatal massage can also provide almost immediate relaxation for a stressed-out and anxious mum-to-be. Even pregnant women who have a relatively easy pregnancy can benefit from the stress reduction and relaxing properties of a prenatal massage.

Potential benefits of prenatal massage include:

- Lessens sciatic pain
- Reduced back pain
- Reduced joint pain
- Can help to reduce pelvic pain
- Stimulates the release of endorphins; the body's natural pain killers
- Offers relief from muscle cramps spasms and myofascial pain, muscle tension and headaches
- Can help to increase energy levels
- Improved oxygenation of soft tissues and muscles
- Can increase the blood and lymph circulation which can in turn:
 - help to reduce and ease any swelling
 - reduce fatigue
 - strengthen the immune system
- Relaxes tense muscles and can help increase flexibility
- Improves digestion
- Improved sleep
- Helps relieve anxiety or depression
- Helps maximize breathing capacity which is needed during labour and delivery
- Provides emotional support and physical nurturing which may be passed on to the baby

When Should I Have A Prenatal Massage?

Prenatal massage is recommended from the start of your second trimester onwards. Please note that it is intended to support and **not** replace the essential antenatal care provided by your GP, Midwife or Obstetrician.

What should I Consider Before Having A Prenatal Massage?

In general prenatal massage has far more benefits than risks, but it is still worth considering both benefits and risks before making an appointment.

Some situations which may mean massage is unsuitable include:

- Massage in an area where there is a blood clot or a bone fracture
- Any area where there is a skin injury or condition that could be aggravated by rubbing, including burns, open wounds, skin infection or eczema
- A high risk pregnancy or other complications
- Pre-term contractions or consistent Braxton-Hicks contractions
- Preeclampsia
- Previous pre-term labour
- Experiencing severe swelling, high blood pressure or sudden, severe headaches

As with any therapeutic approach the best way to address any concerns the mum-to-be may have is to discuss massage therapy with their GP, Midwife or Obstetrician prior to booking a treatment. It is also beneficial to discuss the treatment with the massage therapist.

Who Should Provide Prenatal Massage?

It is important to seek care from a certified and fully qualified massage therapist. I have obtained the Level 5 Diploma in Clinical Sport & Remedial Massage Therapy; the highest level currently available and in addition to this I have also obtained the Certificate in Pregnancy Massage.

What Are Prenatal Massage Treatments Like?

As with all our treatments each prenatal massage treatment is tailored to the individual and a detailed consultation will be carried out during your first appointment in order to create the treatment just for you. Further discussion and feedback will always take place at the beginning of any further treatments.

My primary concern throughout the treatment is your comfort and safety. To this end I have a specially designed prenatal massage couch available, which has hollowed out areas to accommodate your belly and your breasts so that you can lie comfortably on your stomach. This is particularly beneficial in the later stages of pregnancy.

Like all my remedial massage therapy sessions prenatal massage treatments take place in a private treatment room at our purpose built clinic. However, our specialist prenatal couches are portable so, should you prefer, we are very happy to provide your treatment in the comfort of your own home. If you are interested in home visits and want to find out more then please don't hesitate to ask us for details.

How Often Should I Have A Treatment?

That depends entirely on you. Some clients gain benefit from regular and frequent treatments, while others find that a treatment every few weeks works well for them. Often it is a combination, for example if there is a specific need or problem there may be a series of frequent treatments which then move on to further apart but regular treatments. As with everything the frequency will be tailored to the individual's requirements.

Are There Any Side Effects Post Massage?

In general there are very few negative side effects and most of any side effects can be avoided by taking some simple steps. Nausea and dizziness can occur after any massage and are not uncommon during pregnancy. To limit these feelings it is helpful if you avoid eating immediately before a massage and after the massage sit up carefully and stand up off the couch slowly.

At times muscle soreness may be experienced but this is generally the result of not getting enough fluid after a massage. To avoid this drink plenty of water in the first two hours after the massage.

Incorporating Massage into Your Prenatal Care

The benefits of massage can improve overall prenatal health for many pregnant women. Along with the guidance and advice of your GP, Midwife and Obstetrician, massage therapy can be incorporated into routine prenatal care in order to help enhance your pregnancy experience.

To Book A Treatment and To Discuss Your Personal Requirements

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