

Back Pain During Pregnancy: Care Instructions



Overview

Back pain has many possible causes. It is often caused by problems with muscles and ligaments in your back. The extra weight during pregnancy can put stress on your back. Moving, lifting, standing, sitting, or sleeping in an awkward way also can strain your back. Back pain can also be a sign of labor. Although it may hurt a lot, back pain often improves on its own. Use good home treatment, and take care not to stress your back.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

- Ask your doctor about taking acetaminophen (Tylenol) for pain. Do not take aspirin, ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), or naproxen (Aleve).
- Do not take two or more pain medicines at the same time unless the doctor told you to. Many pain medicines have acetaminophen, which is Tylenol. Too much acetaminophen (Tylenol) can be harmful.
- Lie on your side with your knees and hips bent and a pillow between your legs. This reduces stress on your back.
- Put ice or cold packs on your back for 10 to 20 minutes at a time, several times a day. Put a thin cloth between the ice and your skin.
- Warm baths may also help reduce pain.
- Change positions every 30 minutes. Take breaks if you must sit for a long time. Get up and walk around.
- Ask your doctor about how much exercise you can do. You may feel better taking short walks or doing gentle movements and stretching in a swimming pool.
- Ask your doctor about exercises to stretch and strengthen your back.

When should you call for help?



Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- You think you are in labor.
- You have new numbness in your buttocks, genital or rectal areas, or legs.
- You have a new loss of bowel or bladder control.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- You do not get better as expected.

Where can you learn more?

Go to <https://www.healthwise.net/PatientEd>

Enter **C696** in the search box to learn more about "**Back Pain During Pregnancy: Care Instructions**".

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