

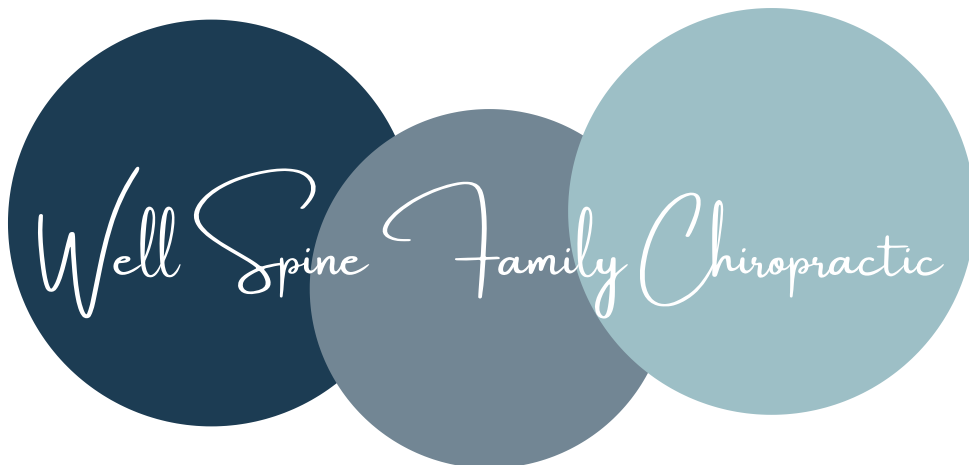
What You Don't Expect When You're Expecting and What You Can Do About It



WELLSPINE
family chiropractic

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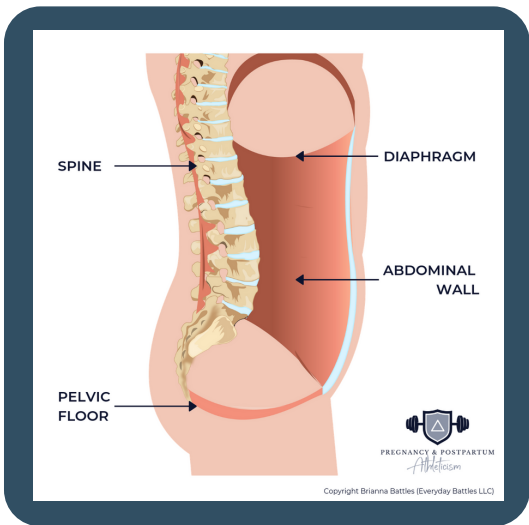
We hear it all the time...

“Why does no one tell you about this?!”

BUT here we are to tell you about it all! We hope this guide helps to clarify common pregnancy concerns/ findings, but also helps point you in the direction of resources or ways that you can reduce symptoms yourself.

Reminder that as always, this is a general **GUIDE** about specific topics and not a diagnosis nor treatment plan. We always recommend seeing a provider for concerns and having a proper assessment and plan set for you as the unique individual you are!

DIASTASIS



So, we can't properly chat pregnancy without dedicating an entire page to the importance of breathing and core/ pelvic floor!

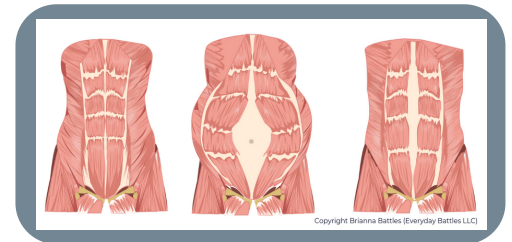
Think of the core as having four sides:
top (diaphragm)
bottom (pelvic floor)
front (abdominal wall)
back (the stabilizer muscles of the back)

These sides all work together to manage pressures within the abdomen. If there is a weakness in one side, the pressure will go to area of least resistance. Think of a filled balloon; if you squeeze one side of the balloon... where does the pressure go? You got it- to the other side.

Managing pressures can help to avoid forces going into the:
Front: possible increased diastasis
Back: possible disc issues
Top: possible hernias/ acid reflux
Bottom: possible pelvic floor concerns

During pregnancy, the belly grows forward. This drops the pelvis forward and creates more tension in the low back. Remember the balloon? This shifting forward can also push pressures forward into the abdomen. The angle of the ribs also expands from 68* to 103* to accommodate a growing little! The abdominal muscles (rectus abdominis) that create the "6 pack" attach here and are not only being pushed outward due to baby taking up real estate in front, but also being pulled outward from the top as those ribs expand outward. This causes the distance between the rectus abdominis muscles to become greater and the connective tissue between them to become more stressed.

This is known as **DIASTASIS RECTI**



Our goal during pregnancy is to manage pressures within the abdomen to try to keep them dispersed as evenly as possible. However, we can't do everything 100% correctly, 100% of the time. This information is meant to INFORM mommas on how their body is changing, why they might be experiencing the things that they are and how we might be able to modify breathing, bracing or positional factors to help.

Diastasis

This is COMPLETELY NORMAL and research shows that all women will have a diastasis by 36 weeks. However, working with pressure management can be helpful in limiting further stress on the abdomen.

- Rolling to go from lying to an upright position and vice versa.
- Working on diaphragmatic breathing.
- Piston breathing/ a breathing pattern that works for you while lifting
- Modifying activities that cause excessive doming/ coning of the abdomen by changing breathing patterns, technique or load
- Taping- this will not "FIX IT", but can help with discomfort



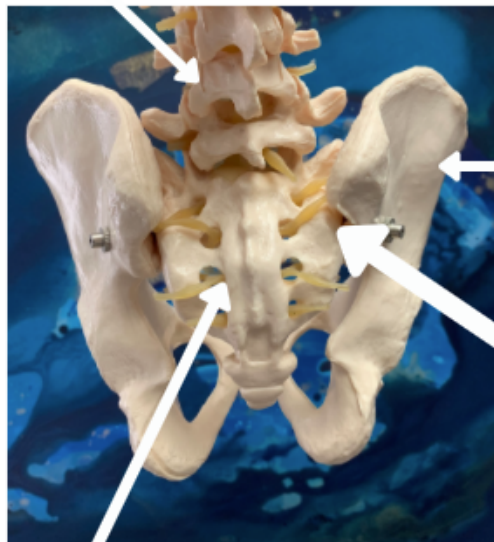
Foot Size Increasing

Hormones that affect ligament laxity don't just impact the pelvis. The ligaments of the feet and ankles are a part of this systemic change too and it's not uncommon for mommas to gain foot length, width and volume during pregnancy.

Why?

Because of the effect of hormones and increased weight, there is a change in stress on the joints of the foot and ankle. There is a shift in the distribution of pressure within the foot and this can cause a change in the length of the ligaments supporting the arch. It is thought that the first pregnancy contributes the greatest degree of change. Since everything is connected and impacts another area of the body, we typically recommend shoes with a bit more support during pregnancy and postpartum. This can help with tension in the calves and pelvic pain issues as well!

LOW BACK



HIPS - ILIUM

SACROILIAC JOINT

TAILBONE - SACRUM

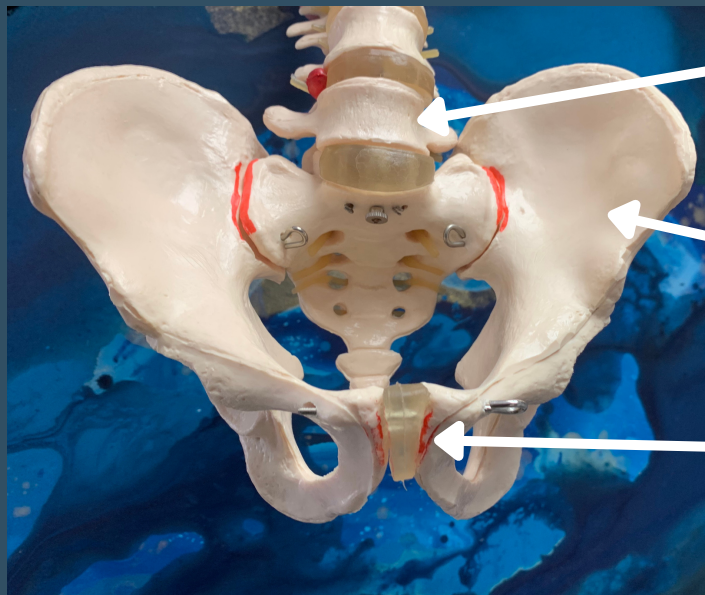
Sacroiliac Joint Pain

During pregnancy, there is a shift in center of gravity as the belly grows forward and the hips begin to shift into a more forward position. The change in biomechanics, tissue pull and muscular tension all contribute to SI joint pain. The goal is to reduce inflammation within the joint and work on any imbalances in surrounding areas.

How do we do this?

- Stability exercises for the pelvis
- Addressing dysfunction/ footwear in the feet and ankles
- SI joint belts
- Muscle work to surrounding tissues
(we find the specific areas and exercises that will work best for YOU in office)
- Core stability work and diaphragmatic breathing
- Addressing excessive anterior pelvic tilt
- CHIRO CARE and pelvic floor physical therapy





Lumbar- low back

Ilium-hip bone

Symphysis Pubis

Symphysis Pubis Dysfunction (SPD) aka Pubic Symphysis Pain:

SPD is caused by irritation to the the pubic symphysis. This can be due to the influence of hormones and the biomechanical changes that we listed under Sacroiliac Joint Pain. This is common more in the second and third trimesters and tends to increase as baby descends.

What can be done?

- Massage work to the abdomen and adductors (inner thigh muscles) - a provider should teach you how to do this properly
- Exercises to address areas lacking in stability/ control
- Narrowing stance with movements such as squatting
- Shortening the stride with walking
- CHIRO CARE and pelvic floor physical therapy
- Connection breath
- Turning in bed with a connection breath and pillow between the knees and feet
- Keeping the knees together when turning to get out of the car

Round Ligament Pain

The round ligament runs from the uterus to the labia and helps the uterus to maintain a forward position during pregnancy.

However, this little guy grows along with the uterus and will typically make its presence known around the second trimester.

What can be done?

- A CHIRO with specific prenatal training is perfect for this. We can help by addressing pelvic dysfunction through adjustments and muscle work
- Flexing the hips before sneezing or coughing
- Abdominal massage -a provider should teach you how to do this properly

Rhinitis (aka: runny nose)

is common in the first trimester and then again towards the end of pregnancy. Increased blood flow to mucous membranes can be thanked for this!

What can you do?

- Breathe Right Strips
- Sinus Flush
 - remember to read the directions and don't use direct tap water!

Nausea

As we know, hormones are changing during pregnancy and it's thought that increases in estrogen, progesterone and HCG are contributors to this fun. Unfortunately, it's not always limited to the morning time and can span the entire length of pregnancy for some, but will commonly only last until the 13th week or so.

What can be done?

- Taking prenats at a different time or splitting them up with meals/snacks throughout the day
- Snacking and smaller meals throughout the day
- Carbs are usually the easiest to tolerate, but try adding a protein and fat when possible
- Vitamin B6, magnesium and ginger supplementation can be helpful - as recommended by a provider

Carpal Tunnel

Carpal tunnel effects up to two thirds of pregnant mommas. It is commonly due to the swelling that comes along with pregnancy and the subsequent compression of the median nerve. This compression can lead to numbness, tingling, etc..

- Muscle work and stretching to the wrist flexors and extensors for better fascial hydration and tissue glide= better movement and flow
- Vitamin B6
- Anti-Inflammatory foods and diet (avoiding anything that typically makes you bloated)
- Wrist guards (especially at night) or holding a pillow with the wrists straight to prevent extended periods of wrist flexion
- Movement and fluids
- Taping for swelling
- Acupuncture

Gestational Diabetes

The placenta creates certain hormones that can prevent insulin from functioning in the body the way that it's supposed to. The pregnant body then has to create more insulin in order to beat out the effects of these hormones. For some women, the extra insulin still isn't enough to keep their blood sugar levels in an ideal range.

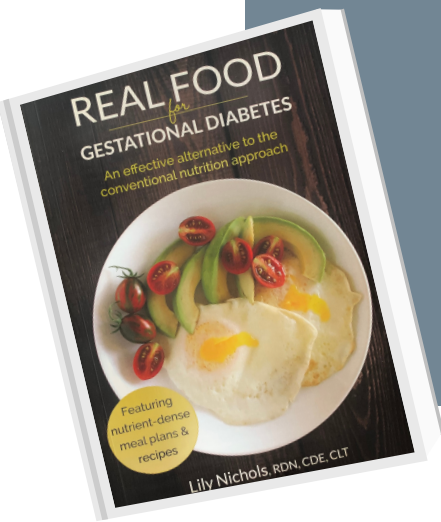
What to do about it?

Here is an AMAZING resource for everything pregnancy and nutrition related:

[Lily Nichols Book- Real Food for Pregnancy](#)

For specific Gestation Diabetes info:

[Lily Nichols Book- Real Food for Gestational Diabetes](#)



Group B Strep

Women are typically tested for Group B Strep around 36 weeks. However, working to have healthy gut and vaginal microbiomes may help decrease the chance of colonization (=positive test).

This is covered EXTENSIVELY in an [article](#)/ podcast by Aviva Romm MD... check it out for the answer to every and any question you may have regarding this topic!



Varicose Veins

Estrogen and progesterone cause relaxation of smooth muscle (what the walls of the veins are made of) which causes them to become larger. Blood volume increases during pregnancy and the rate at which blood moves back up from the legs decreases. The uterus also puts pressure on the vein that shuttles blood from the legs back to the heart which causes additional stress to the veins.

When will they go away?

They typically improve in 3-4 months postpartum. Though this can take up to a year. Give yourself time!

What can be done?

- Compression shorts, taping and working with the pelvic positioning through adjustments and muscle work can make a huge difference
- Avoid sitting or standing in the same position for extended periods
 - Special shout out to the chronic leg crossers- this is for you!
- Wearing flats is preferred since this requires you to use your calf muscles more = better circulation and pumping
- Get regular exercise (better circulation and pumping) and elevate your legs periodically to improve circulation
- Drink plenty of water and eat enough fiber to prevent constipation (increased straining and pressures = not ideal)
- Increase flavonoid consumption (decreases inflammation)
 - The brighter colors indicate more flavonoids
 - Broccoli, spinach, cherries, etc.

Thanks for hanging out with us for a bit! Have any questions? Reach out through any of the contact points below to set up a time to come in and chat.

We LOVE this stuff and would love to help!

Cheers,

Well Spine Crew



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