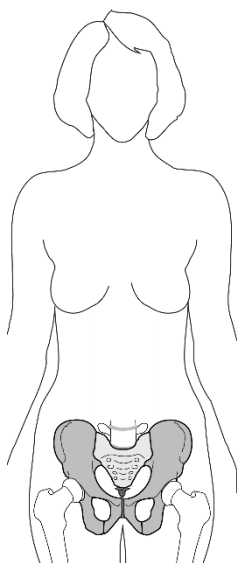


Pregnancy and Pelvic Girdle Pain

[Pregnancy-related Pelvic Girdle Pain or PPGP]

Physiotherapy



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Managing pelvic pain during and after pregnancy



What is pregnancy-related pelvic girdle pain?

This is pain in and around the pelvis, low back, hips, and thighs. It can appear in pregnancy or up to one year after the birth.

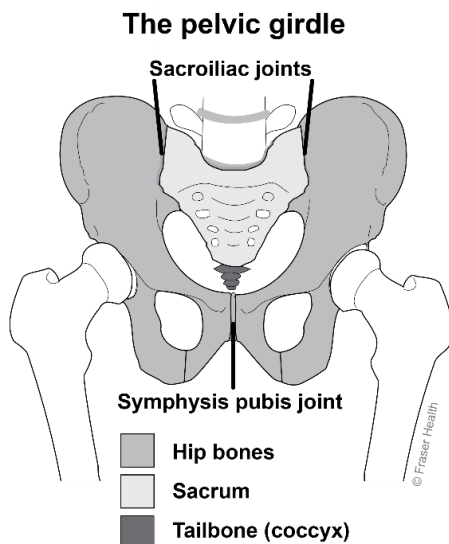
The pain can be sharp or achy. Sometimes it feels like it is pain in one of the joints of the pelvis. Sometimes it feels like pain in muscle.

You might feel the pain with certain movements such as when rolling over in bed, standing up from sitting, standing for a long time, and standing on one leg to use stairs or put pants on.

About one in 7 pregnant people experience some pelvic girdle pain. While it is common, it is not a “normal” part of pregnancy. It is not a serious condition, but it can limit you from moving about as you would like and from taking part in activities you usually enjoy.

Pelvic girdle pain can be treated at any stage during or after pregnancy. Many do well treating it on their own but a physiotherapist help them to manage their pain and move in ways that are comfortable.

The pelvic girdle is the ring of bones at the base of your spine that make up your pelvis. The bones include your hip bones, your sacrum, and your tailbone (coccyx). Joints connect the bones together.



How can I do to manage the pain?

You can reduce the pain with regular **exercise**, getting a good night's **sleep**, practicing **mindfulness** and other ways to relax, and reducing your workload if needed.

Some people use a support belt around their pelvis. The compression can feel soothing and help you move more comfortably.

While it is not clear that other manual therapies are effective (such as massage therapy, manual adjustments, or acupuncture), many people do experience less pain with these types of therapies.

Usually, pelvic girdle pain is limited to the time you are pregnant. A small number of people continue to have this pain after giving birth.

Exercise

The Canadian guidelines for exercise during pregnancy is to do at least 150 minutes a week of moderate intensity activity.

If you are new to exercising, you might choose to start with a shorter amount of time each week and gradually increase the time.

It is best to choose something you enjoy or think you would enjoy. Examples include walking, yoga, exercise classes, weight training, and swimming.

To know if what you are doing is a moderate intensity, check in with your breathing.

- If you can easily talk without pausing while you do the activity, it means it is probably too easy for it to be considered moderate activity.
- If you can talk but need pauses, this is likely a moderate intensity for you.
- If you cannot talk at all, this might be too intense for you.

Sleep

There are many ways you can get a better sleep.

Here are just a few:

- Try not to use screens, such as smart phones, computers, and TV, during the 2 hours before sleep. This helps prepare your body for sleep.
- Keep the room you sleep in cool. It can also help to limit the noise and light in the room.
- Use a fan or noise machine to help drown out background noise.
- Limit caffeine products during the 6 to 8 hours before sleep.
- Sleep alone if you find your partner, child, or pet wake you up during the night (this might not be possible for everyone).

Mindfulness

Some ways to relax and practice mindfulness include meditation, deep breathing, guided imagery, body scanning, and mindful movement activities like yoga or Tai Chi.

To get you started, there are many free online resources and apps (such as Headspace, Calm, Breathr, and UCLA Mindful).

How can I move more comfortably?

For many, just rolling over in bed or getting into standing can bring on the pelvic girdle pain. Here are examples of how to do activities in a new way and reduce pain with these movements.



Rolling over in bed

- Begin by looking in the direction you want to roll and bring your arm across your body.
- Bend up the knee opposite to the direction you want to roll and place your foot on the bed.
- Turn your head, push down through your foot, tighten your buttock muscles to lift your hips, and push yourself onto your side.



Getting in and out of bed

- Once you are laying on your side, drop your feet over the edge of the bed and use your arms to push yourself up into sitting.
- Do not try to pull yourself up from lying on your back.
- Reverse this to get into bed. From sitting on the bed, lower yourself onto your side with your arms and bring your feet up onto the bed.



Getting up from a chair

- Begin by wiggling forward to the edge of the chair.
- Place your feet as wide as your hips and try putting one foot slightly ahead of the other so your feet are staggered.
- As you stand, push down through your feet, squeeze your buttock muscles, and think about leading with the crown of your head. For most people, this causes the buttocks muscles to do most of the work to get you into standing and is usually more comfortable.



Standing for long periods

- Widen your stance by placing your feet wider apart. Bend your knees slightly.
- Shift your weight from side to side using your buttocks muscles to squeeze and then push you back to centre.



Walking

- Squeeze your buttock muscles on your standing leg before you take a step with the other leg.
- You might need to use a walking aid such as a walker. Your physiotherapist can show you how to use one.



Using stairs

- Squeeze your buttock muscles on your standing leg before you take a step up with the other leg.
- Take one step at a time or try stepping up sideways.

Resources

Once you return home, you might want to see a private physiotherapist in your community.

Physiotherapists are movement specialists. They can help guide you with starting exercise and help you find ways to do every day activities with less discomfort. Along with the ways to manage and move suggested in this booklet, a physiotherapist can help you with your specific pelvic girdle pain.

To find a physiotherapist that specializes in working with people who are pregnant and those who have recently given birth (perinatal care):

1. Go to bcphysio.org
2. Click on 'Find a Physio/Clinic'
3. Enter a location.
4. Under 'Areas of practice', select 'Pelvic floor' and 'Women's health'.
5. Click on 'Apply'



Scan QR Code to
Find a Physio

Please note: Most physiotherapists are self-employed and charge a fee for their service. You might have extended health benefits that cover some or all of the costs for this service. If not, you will need to pay for the service.

www.fraserhealth.ca

This information does not replace the advice given to you by your healthcare provider.

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