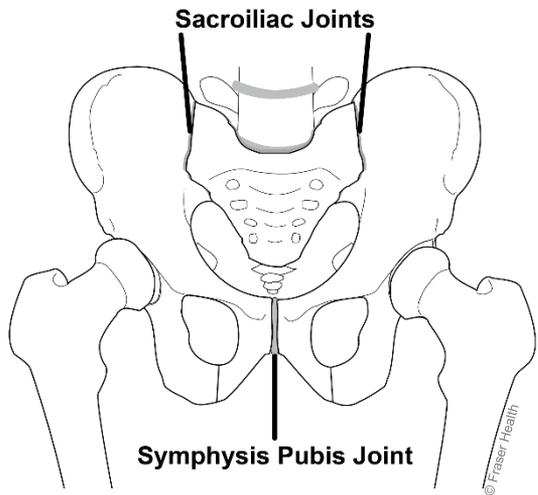
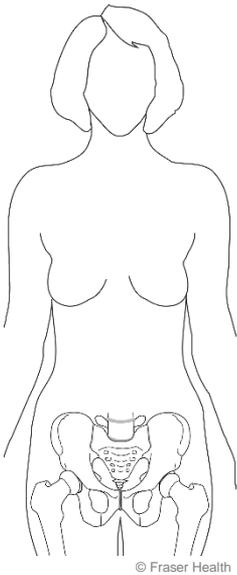


# Symphysis Pubis Dysfunction

Physiotherapy



Dealing with pelvic pain during and after pregnancy

## What is Symphysis Pubis Dysfunction?

The symphysis pubis is a joint at the front and centre of your pelvis (see diagram on front cover). This joint is made up of cartilage, ligaments, and muscles. It keeps your pelvis stable while allowing your body to move for daily activities like walking.

During pregnancy and weeks after childbirth, your hormones allow your ligaments and muscles around the pelvis to become more stretchy and soft. This allows your pelvis to open up for the birth of your baby. These changes can cause pain when moving from one position to another.

## How do I take care of myself?

Take time to rest, relax, and breathe.

Sleep with a flat pillow between your legs. Keep it there to turn in bed.

Sit down during tasks you usually do standing (like preparing food or getting dressed).

Try wrapping ice in a towel and put it on the painful area for 15 minutes 3 to 4 times a day. Do not put ice directly on your skin.

### Try not to:

- ✗ sit on soft sofas and chairs
- ✗ stand for long periods  
(if you have to stand, put equal weight on both legs)
- ✗ do activities that strain your pelvis like squatting or sitting cross-legged
- ✗ separate your legs more than shoulder distance apart  
(for example, during sexual intercourse try lying on your side)
- ✗ lift heavy things, step over things, vacuum, or twist your body  
(always face what you are doing)

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**Support Belts:** Some women find the use of support belts helpful during pregnancy and in the early days of post-partum. Please speak to your physiotherapist to find one that is right for you.

## How do I protect my pelvis?

Before and during any of these movements, try breathing out (exhale) and connecting to your pelvic floor muscles (focus on them).



### Getting in and out of bed

- Sit on the edge of the bed with your knees 'glued' together.
- Lie down on your side while lifting both of your legs up sideways at the same time.
- Reverse this to get out of bed.
- Do not try to pull yourself up from lying on your back.



### Rolling over in bed

- Squeeze a flat pillow between your knees while rolling over.



### Getting up from a chair

- Keep your knees 'glued' together.
- Put your hands on your knees.
- Lean your nose over your toes while standing up.
- Reverse this to sit down.



### Getting into a car

- Sit down first.
- Keep your knees 'glued' together while swinging your legs in (try using a plastic bag on the seat to help with turning).



### Walking

- Take smaller steps.
- You might need to use a walking aid such as a walker or elbow crutches.



### Using stairs

- Take one step at a time or try stepping up sideways.
- Avoid stairs if possible.

## What exercises can I do?

While doing the exercises, try to breathe normally and not hold your breath.

- Find your pelvic floor muscle – gently squeeze and lift these muscles inside as if trying to stop your flow of urine and hold wind. Try holding for 2 to 3 seconds and then completely relax. Repeat 5 times. Try to keep the bottom, inner thighs and abdominal muscles relaxed. If you cannot feel these muscles working or are unsure it is best to see a Pelvic Floor Physiotherapist.
- Find your deep abdominals – gently draw in your lower tummy muscles and hold 2 to 3 seconds then completely relax. Repeat 5 times.
- Find your bottom muscles – tighten your bottom muscles, hold for 5 seconds and then completely relax. Repeat 5 times.
- Find your inner thigh muscles – place a fist or rolled up towel between your knees and gently squeeze, holding for 2 to 3 seconds. Repeat 5 times.

Talk to your physiotherapist about which exercises are safe for you.

## Resources

Once you return home, you might want to see a private physiotherapist in your community. To find a physiotherapist that specializes in working with women who have recently given birth (perinatal care):

1. Go to [bcphysio.org](http://bcphysio.org)
2. Click on 'Find a Physio'
3. Select 'Pelvic floor' and 'Women's health' from 'Areas of practice'
4. Select your city
5. Click on 'Search'



Scan QR Code to  
Find a Physio

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[www.fraserhealth.ca](http://www.fraserhealth.ca)

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

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To order: [patienteduc.fraserhealth.ca](mailto:patienteduc.fraserhealth.ca)