

# Back Pain in Pregnancy

---

Pregnancy is a time of many physical changes. These changes also impact the spine, joints and muscles and can result in mild to severe back pain in pregnancy. Pregnancy hormones relax and stretch joints giving the mother less support. Also, the changing body shifts the center of gravity and this can cause pain. Back pain may not go away until birth. Our goal of treatment is to reduce the pain.

## What can I do to reduce back pain?

- Alternate moist heat and ice to the affected area.
- Soak in a warm tub bath for at least 20 minutes at a time. Repeat as needed.
- Avoid sitting and standing for long periods of time.
- Wear low-heeled, well-fitting and supportive shoes.
- Take frequent rest periods. Avoid lifting anything heavier than a gallon of milk.
- When lifting, squat down, bend knees and keep the back straight.
- Stress can cause backaches. Look for ways to decrease the stressors in your life.
- Ask your partner for a massage, or treat yourself to a professional massage
- Ask your health care provider about maternity support belts.
- If your mattress is old and soft, consider replacing or using plywood under the mattress for firm support.
- Sit in chairs with good back support, or use a small pillow to provide support.
- Sleep on your side with pillows between the knees for support.
- Your health care provider may refer you to physical therapy for evaluation and treatment of your back pain.

- You may take Tylenol® for pain. Take two 325mg -500mg tablets up to 3 times a day.

### **When should I call my health care provider?**

Call Triage at 734-764-8134 if have any of the following signs and symptoms:

- back pain worsens, and the above therapies are not helping
- back pain is accompanied by contractions, bleeding, and loss of fluid or decrease in fetal movement.

Disclaimer: This document contains information and/or instructional materials developed by Michigan Medicine for the typical patient with your condition. It may include links to online content that was not created by Michigan Medicine and for which Michigan Medicine does not assume responsibility. It does not replace medical advice from your health care provider because your experience may differ from that of the typical patient. Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about this document, your condition or your treatment plan.

Author: Bailey, Joanne CNM PhD,  
Reviewers: Getty, Barbara CNM MS, Crane, Patricia RNC MS

Patient Education by [Michigan Medicine](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International Public License](#). Last Revised 03/2021