

Pelvic Instability



Pelvic instability (PI) is a condition that causes pain around the joints of the pelvis (pelvic girdle) during and after pregnancy. In normal pregnancy a hormone called relaxin softens the ligaments around the joints of the pelvis. This is a natural process which prepares the maternal pelvis for childbirth and does not usually cause lasting discomfort. For some women this natural process seems to go wrong, causing the joints of the pelvis to become too lax. This can result in the pelvis becoming unstable. The degree of instability will vary for individual patients.

Pregnancy can also put strain on the muscles of the back, stomach, pelvic floor, hips and pelvic girdle which may also lead to the pelvic joints becoming less stable. Pelvic instability can also occur due to a previous fall or injury to the pelvis and in rare cases by complications in labor or the post-natal period.

The symptoms of PI include :

- Pain in the front or back of the pelvis, groin, buttocks, thighs, hips or lower back.
- Difficulty walking or a waddling gait.
- Pain felt when turning, twisting or bending: this will be felt or noted in many day to day activities.
- Women may feel and/or hear a clicking, clunking or grinding sensation in their pelvis.
- Some women find it difficult to part their legs without severe pain.
- Pain and difficulty with sexual intercourse.
- Urinary incontinence and/or bowel problems.
- Pain and difficulty squatting.

If the above symptoms describe what you are feeling, it is important for you to discuss this with your chiropractor. Most women who receive regular chiropractic care during and after pregnancy report a significant improvement in their symptoms and mobility. This allows them to get on with their everyday activities without the need for aids or support belts.

It is, however, sometimes necessary to use a pelvic support belt at the very end of pregnancy if pain and mobility difficulties are persistent. This strategy will decrease pain while still allowing for a satisfactory level of function. It is also necessary to have an increased frequency of chiropractic care during this time.

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