



# Minimize

## PREGNANCY-RELATED

# Back Pain

Did you know that at least half of pregnant women experience back pain? And 10% of those report discomfort severe enough to disrupt their daily routines. The good news is that there are steps you can take to protect your back during pregnancy.

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### What causes pregnancy-related back pain in the first place?

When pregnant, it's normal to gain more than 30 pounds. This extra weight places considerable stress on your back, feet, ankles and knees. As your baby grows, your core abdominal muscles become stretched and cannot stabilize your posture as well as they did before.

In the third trimester, levels of a hormone called "relaxin" increase by a factor of ten. Relaxin loosens your joints to allow the pelvis to accommodate the enlarging uterus. These loose joints force the muscles of the back and pelvis to work overtime to keep you upright and balanced, leading to back pain.

### TRY THESE TIPS TO HELP MINIMIZE YOUR RISK OF BACK PAIN:



#### Exercise

Exercise can go a long way to increase muscle support for an aching back. A health care practitioner should always be consulted before starting a new exercise regimen. Low impact cardiovascular activities, such as swimming, walking, or stationary cycling can help relieve pain and maintain fitness.



## Sleep Position

Sleep on your left side to reduce the pressure of your uterus on the large blood vessels in your abdomen, optimizing blood flow to both you and the baby.



## Pillow Position

Place a pillow between your knees to take pressure off your lower back when sleeping on your side.



## Support Your Body

With the added weight, support has never been more important. Wear flat, supportive shoes and use a lumbar support pillow in your chair at home or work. If you sit at a computer or desk, walk around for a few minutes each hour.



## Take Breaks

Take frequent, short breaks with your feet elevated. Adequate rest restores your energy and gives your back a chance to relax.



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