

### **Pain-free range of movement:**

Before your labour, if you are still having some restriction with opening your legs you could measure how far apart you can separate your knees without pain when lying on your back (this is your pain-free range). Awareness of this during your labour can help prevent aggravation of your pain.

### **Pelvic Girdle Support Belts:**

Support belts can sometimes provide some relief of symptoms, however they can aggravate pain and be uncomfortable for some women. Their occasional use is recommended during activities (e.g. getting to and from work, childcare responsibilities). It is not recommended if you have a low lying placenta.

There are a number of different products available for less than £30.00 the aim of the belt is to help support your bump whilst providing compression across your hips.

The midwifery teams and the physiotherapy departments do not supply these.

### **For more information:**

❖ **Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Women's Health:** ([www.acpwh.csp.org.uk](http://www.acpwh.csp.org.uk))

Click on: PUBLICATION & LEAFLETS and select: Pregnancy-Related Pelvic Girdle Pain (for Mother-to-be and New Mother)

❖ **Pelvic Partnership:**  
[www.pelvicpartnership.org.uk](http://www.pelvicpartnership.org.uk)

If your symptoms persist for more than two weeks or interfere with your normal day-to-day life please either discuss this with your midwife or contact one of the physiotherapy departments for an assessment. The teams book for the next 72 hours:

Torbay Physiotherapy Department:  
☎ **(01803)** 655354 (phone lines opened 0800-1200)

Newton Abbot, Dawlish, Teignmouth, Totnes, Dartmouth, Ashburton and Bovey Tracey: ☎ **(01626)** 883765 (phone lines open 0830-1600)

Paignton and Brixham: ☎ **(01803)** 547117 (phone lines open 0800-1200)

South Devon Healthcare **NHS**  
NHS Foundation Trust

## **PATIENT INFORMATION**



# **Pregnancy - related Pelvic Girdle Pain (PGP)**

(Previously called  
Symphysis Pubis  
Dysfunction)

## Introduction

Pregnancy-Related Pelvic Girdle Pain (PGP) is common; with mild discomfort occurring in the back or front of the pelvis occurring in approximately 1 in 5 pregnant women. Women experience different symptoms, the aim is to reduce the impact these have on your life.

## What causes PGP?

There are a number of factors that can contribute to PGP; usually it is a combination of:

- ❖ The joints moving unevenly.
- ❖ Change in muscle strength of the stomach, pelvis, hip and pelvic floor (this results in the pelvis having less support).
- ❖ Previous accident, trauma or fall.
- ❖ Incorrectly or awkward working conditions/workstation.
- ❖ Very occasionally, PGP is caused by hormones.

## What are the signs and symptoms of Pelvic Girdle Pain?

Pain and/or discomfort is often felt over the pubic bone, across the lower back (on one or both sides) into the groin, inner thighs and/or the hips.

You may find the following activities aggravate your symptoms:

- ❖ Walking.
- ❖ Standing on one leg (e.g. climbing stairs, standing to put on underwear).
- ❖ Moving legs apart (e.g. getting in and out of the car or bath).
- ❖ Rolling over in bed or twisting.
- ❖ Difficulty in your household chores.
- ❖ Clicking/grinding at the pubic bone.
- ❖ Intercourse.

## What can you do to help?

If you have had some treatment or your daily lifestyle activities do not increase your pain, some of the following advice may not apply:

- ❖ Be as active as possible within pain limits (avoiding activities that make your pain worse).
- ❖ If it is offered, accept help with household chores.
- ❖ Take any opportunity to rest.
- ❖ Avoid standing on one leg (e.g. when dressing your lower half).
- ❖ Wear flat supportive shoes.
- ❖ Avoid standing when possible (e.g. when ironing or preparing food).
- ❖ When getting in and out of the car, try to keep your legs together.
- ❖ Try sleeping with a pillow in between your legs.

- ❖ Keep your legs together when rolling in and out of bed.
- ❖ Take the stairs one at a time.
- ❖ Plan your day to avoid going up and down the stairs.
- ❖ Try alternative positions if you desire sexual intercourse (e.g. lying on your side or kneeling on all fours).

## What treatments can help?

Physiotherapy treatment may include:

- ❖ Exercises to retrain and strengthen stomach, back, hip, bottom and pelvic floor muscles.
- ❖ Manual therapy.
- ❖ Advice regarding lifestyle changes and managing your pregnancy.

## What sort of labour should I plan?

Most women with PGP can have a normal vaginal delivery. Consider the following:

- ❖ Use gravity by staying as upright as possible, this helps the baby move downwards (e.g. kneeling, all fours, standing).
- ❖ Lying flat on your back reduces the pelvic opening and may slow labour.
- ❖ Consider labouring in water. This allows you to move freely.