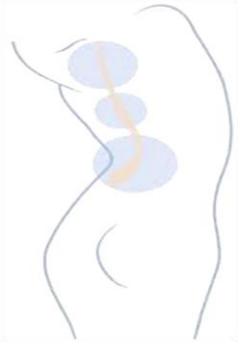


3 Counties News

from 3 Counties Chiropractic Clinic

April 2013



Chiropractic Awareness week – Back pain in parents

This **April 15th – 21st**, Chiropractic Awareness Week, 3 Counties Chiropractic Clinic is encouraging parents to straighten out their approach to back care as new consumer research shows that 82%* of people in the Midlands have suffered from back / neck pain at some point in their lives – 61%* of those being parents.

The research, commissioned by the British Chiropractic Association, also shows that over half (56%*) of parents in the Midlands say their back or neck pain has prevented them from lifting or carrying their child.

According to these new statistics, parents are not just limited in lifting and carrying their children. 35%* of the Midlands parents said their back or neck pain has prevented them from carrying their child's car seat or carry basket and 39%* say that back or neck pain has prevented them from playing with their child.

The British Chiropractic Association offers the following advice on how parents can look after their children whilst maintaining a healthy back:

Carrying your baby or toddler

- Carrying your baby as close as possible to your centre of gravity is advisable – across your back or front is best. A carrier/sling or papoose is a good option
- Select a carrier that 'criss-crosses' at the back, so baby's weight is distributed more evenly. Make sure you read the instructions that come with the product to ensure that you are using it correctly
- As your baby grows, lifting and carrying gets more difficult. Encouraging toddlers to do as much as possible for themselves, as appropriate, such as getting into the car seat, will save your back a lot of stress

Using Prams/Pushchairs

- A pushchair or pram with adjustable height settings is ideal, as it can be moved to suit your own height and that of anyone else who will be pushing it.

What happens to your spine and pelvis during pregnancy?

When you are pregnant the hormone Relaxin is produced and it continues to rise during the 1st trimester and in the final weeks of pregnancy. This hormone as the name suggests "relaxes" or loosens the muscles, tendons and ligaments in the body in order to allow the body to accommodate the growing baby. This hormone also breaks down collagen and prevents it from being synthesized.

So what does all this mean?

Well firstly, the increased weight of the belly means your pelvis tilts forward and as a result, your back compensates by arching back further i.e. the curve in your back deepens in order for you to maintain your balance. This "hyperlordotic" position can then cause the joints in your back to jam up and be irritated as the normal lubrication and movement through them is reduced.

What about the pelvis?

The joint between your pelvis (the ilium) & your spine (the sacrum) is called the sacroiliac joint (SIJ). Normally the rough, groove like connecting surfaces of the sacrum and ilium interlock and help stabilise the joint. However when you are pregnant the Relaxin hormone loosens and widens the joints at the front and back of the pelvis (SIJ and pubic symphysis) which reduces their stability and changes the efficiency of the muscles which attach around that region. Essentially the joint itself is loose, the ligaments become lax, and the muscles which usually stabilise the pelvis aren't able to work as efficiently. When you put all this together with the increased load on the baby you have an unstable pelvis which often causes pain.



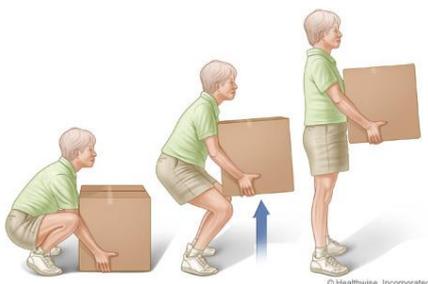
You should be able to walk upright with a straight spine and your hands resting at a comfortable height, which will help you maintain a good posture

Playing with your child

- Get down to your child's level, rather than bending over
- Avoid spending too long kneeling down as this can put pressure on the knees. If you are kneeling, keep your back straight
- In any position, it is easy to get absorbed in what you and your child are doing. Try to remember to change position regularly

Don't bend to pick up toys, bend your knees. Watch your child and observe the natural squatting posture they use to pick things up. It's very important to keep your **stomach muscles pulled in tight** at all times to protect your spine – the more you do it the easier it becomes!

Don't forget to lift correctly – even when you are lifting your children!



General Posture Advice

The fitter you are and the more muscle tone you have the less likely you are to injure yourself. Talk to your chiropractor, GP or other healthcare provider for advice on exercises to develop your core strength.

Parents of babies and children inevitably carry heavy bags! Using a rucksack style bag is best as you can spread the weight evenly across your back. Check the straps are tightened so that the load is held against your back. Avoid high heels and wear comfortable, supportive shoes.

When sitting, let the seat take your weight and, if possible, keep as much of your body in contact with the chair so that your whole body is supported. Knees should be lower than your hips.

If you have children already, it can be difficult if they need lifting and carrying. Always lift with your spine straight, your stomach muscles pulled in tight and bend knees to avoid leaning, stretching or bending.

Simple activities such as stretching and shoulder shrugging can all help to keep your back in line. Do not sit for prolonged periods, take a regular break and,

If you are suffering from joint or muscle pain or know someone else who is please send them to see us at the clinic! Chiropractic care restores normal movement to damaged joints and muscles – helping you to move more freely and relieve pain and stiffness. For an easy 3-minute posture improvement exercise routine have a look at **StraightenUpUK** [here](#).

Child's Pose Balasana



Child's pose is a great hip opener and spine lengthener. It really opens out the joints of your spine and helps your muscles relax. It is safe and appropriate for any stage of pregnancy with a few modifications (i.e. making space for the bump!) Hold for as long as feels comfortable.