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Back Pain in Pregnancy

Most women have some back pain during pregnancy. It is caused by the change in posture that occurs as your uterus grows. The loosening of joints that occurs in late pregnancy also causes discomfort.

Can I avoid back pain?

- Avoid sitting or standing in one position for long periods of time.
- Avoid arching or twisting motions with your back
- When lifting heavy things, keep your back straight and use your leg muscles to lift
- Whenever you have sitting, put your feet up on a low stool or box so that your hips tilt forward and the curve in your lower back straightens out
- Try moist warm or cold packs. Get a massage
- Warm baths where the water is deep enough to cover your belly can help
- Stay active. Exercise, even just walking for 20-30 minutes a day, helps keep muscles strong
- Use pillows at night to help support your back. Place one under your belly and between your knees

What exercises can help?

Get on your hands and knees then rock/tilt your pelvis under until your back slightly arches. Face a chair and place one foot up on it. Keep your back straight as you gently lean forward to stretch the back of your thigh. Hold these stretches for 3-5 seconds and repeat 10-20 times.

What is sciatica?

The sciatic nerve is a large nerve that runs down the back, across the buttocks and down the back of your legs. Sciatica pain occurs when pressure is put on the sciatic nerve. The pain may be sharp or shooting. Your back or legs may feel numb or tingling. It may feel like you can't move your leg. The treatment is the same as for back pain. Physical therapy may help in severe cases.