

HEALTH REPORT

VOLUME 9

ISSUE 47

PREGNANT? CHIROPRACTIC AND ACUPUNCTURE OFFER MORE COMFORTABLE PREGNANCIES AND EASIER BIRTHS

There are many complaints that can occur during pregnancy and birth, and Chiropractic and Acupuncture offer solutions without the dangers that medications might bring.

A recent study published in the *British Medical Journal* described the benefit that Acupuncture offered 394 pregnant women in Sweden. All the women in the study complained of pain in the area of the pelvic girdle, the circle of bones including the pelvis and sacrum. Women in the study were separated into three groups and were given:

1. Standard treatment consisting of a supporting belt and home exercise program
2. Standard treatment plus Acupuncture
3. Standard treatment plus stabilizing exercises meant to improve mobility and strength.

The groups receiving Acupuncture and the stabilizing exercises experienced less pain in the morning and evening and the Acupuncture group reported the least discomfort overall.

And if a mother-to-be is told that she can expect a breech birth, she would be wise to head for a Chiropractor familiar with the Webster Breech Turning Technique. The late Dr. Larry Webster developed a Chiropractic technique that lessens stress in the pelvic area, permitting many babies to turn before birth. A survey of Chiropractors in the U.S. and Canada found that doctors had treated 112 mothers with breech babies with this technique resulting in 102 cases where the babies turned properly for birth.

SOURCE: <http://www.americanpregnancy.org/pregnancyhealth/chiropracticcare.html>;
http://www.chiropracticresearch.org/NEWS_chiropractic_technique_helps_tur.htm;
<http://www.forbes.com/lifestyle/health/feeds/hscout/2005/03/18/hscout524605.html>

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EXERCISE AND ACUPUNCTURE HELP WOMEN THROUGH PREGNANCY PAIN

Acupuncture, combined with stretching exercises and special pillows, helps relieve back and pelvic pain that occurs during pregnancy. Acupuncture alone helps the majority of pregnant women, with even better results than physiotherapy.

A study of women with both back and pelvic pain showed that 60 percent who received Acupuncture treatment reported less intense pain, compared to 14 percent of women who did not. The study found no complications associated with the use of Acupuncture in pregnant women.

Back and pelvic pain can interfere with everything – work, recreation and even sleep. According to an updated review of eight studies involving 1,305 pregnant women from Sweden, Iran, Brazil, Thailand and Australia, more than two-thirds of pregnant women experience back pain and almost one-fifth report pelvic pain.

“When you’re pregnant, your center of gravity is off. You have to arch your back to balance this huge tummy, so you end up with extra strain on your back and pelvic muscles,” said Victoria Pennick, M.H.Sc., a senior clinical research project manager at the Institute for Work & Health in Toronto, Canada.

Although none of the eight studies reviewed addressed back or pelvic pain specifically, data on the effects of pregnancy-specific strengthening exercises, water exercises, Acupuncture and other pain-relief interventions to regular prenatal care were available.

“We were able to group trials about women who had back pain alone, women who had pelvic pain alone and both,” Pennick said.

The review authors found that women who participated in prenatal exercise programs to stretch the pelvic muscles, strengthen the abdominal and hamstring muscles and increase spinal flexibility reported significant decreases in back pain compared to women who received the usual prenatal care.

One study evaluated work absenteeism during pregnancy and found that only 12.9 percent who participated in water gymnastics missed work due to low back pain, compared with 21.7 percent who received usual prenatal care. Another study found good results from use of the “Ozzlo” pillow, a soft curved cushion designed to support the pregnant abdomen when lying down, superior to a regular pillow in relieving back pain.

On average, women who followed through with pelvic or back pain interventions experienced some pain relief and reported less need for pain medication, physical therapy and posture-support belts.

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HAPPIER, HEALTHIER BABIES RESULT FROM ACUPUNCTURE TREATMENTS

When traditional treatments don't work, parents of babies as young as six weeks old are finding success using Acupuncture to improve conditions including colic, sleeping problems, eating problems, excessive crying, chicken pox, colds, flu and developmental disabilities such as autism.

Savannah is a three-year-old living in Sydney, Australia, who was diagnosed with autism. After ten weeks of Acupuncture, gentle massage and dietary changes her mother said, "We've really seen Savannah come back out of her shell. We're getting better eye contact and she's engaging more and initiating play. Both her speech therapist and occupational therapist, independently and unprompted, have told me they've noticed a wonderful increase in her interaction."

Her sister, one-year-old Ella, had a condition that caused her temperature to drop dramatically at night. Medical doctors could not figure out what caused it and tried several courses of antibiotics with no results.

Ella's mother said her daughter's temperature improved almost immediately after the first session with Acupuncture, homeopathy and a change in diet.

Maria Deligiannis, the acupuncturist treating Savannah and her sister, said that with more parents seeking treatment for the common problems of infancy, babies now make up almost a third of her practice.

SOURCE: <http://www.smb.com.au/news/national/babies-acupuncture-and-the-secret-to-a-good-nights-sleep/2005/09/03/1125302782104.html?oneclick=true>

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ACUPRESSURE BRINGS NATURAL DELIVERY WHILE DOCTORS PLAN A C-SECTION

A first-time mother, who was having a very difficult time in the hours leading up to the delivery of her child, was greatly helped with acupressure administered by an attending nurse. As a result, a child who very likely would have come into the world via a Caesarean Section arrived through a natural birth.

The 32-year-old expectant mother was having a very difficult labor and had already been placed on Pitocin™ (a drug that increases contractions), but was not making any progress. There was also concern that the baby's head was not in position to fit through the pelvis. A C-section was being considered as the baby's head should have descended by this point in the delivery process.

It was at this stage that nurse Pamela Wallach began to administer acupressure to the mother. Ms. Wallach, a nurse with 21 years of experience, who had also studied Chinese medicine at the Midwest Center for the Study of Oriental Medicine in Chicago.

The nurse performed acupressure on the mother's back while enlisting the help of the husband to apply pressure to a point on her feet. Acupressure helped the mother with her labor by regulating and increasing the circulation of blood and qi (energy), plus inducing downward movement of the baby's head.

Within just 20 minutes the contractions became more efficient and stronger in intensity. The Pitocin flow was reduced as the woman's own contractions began to engage. Her mental outlook also greatly improved as she began to feel the baby's head moving downward and into birthing position.

After one hour, the mother was completely dilated and ready to push. Within one more hour of pushing, the mother delivered spontaneously. All involved were elated and very pleased. By looking at the situation and the body in a different way and moving the blood and energy, a natural birth occurred and a C-section was avoided.

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ACUPRESSURE PROVIDES SIGNIFICANT RELIEF DURING LABOR!

The benefits of Acupressure are finding their way into the maternity ward. Women who received Acupressure on a small number of points during their labor have reported benefits such as reduction in pain, an improved sense of calmness and a high level of satisfaction with the birth experience.

Debra Betts is a New Zealand Registered Nurse and Acupuncturist. Over the last decade, she has turned much of her attention to the benefits of Acupressure in the birthing process. She has isolated eight different pressure points that provide relief to the laboring mother and she can teach the mother's partner to use the techniques effectively in just a short training session.

Nurse Betts did a follow-up with a sample of 74 women to whom she taught Acupressure over the period of a year. She found that 88% of these trained women attempted to use Acupressure. Of these, 86% used it successfully in labor to significantly reduce their pain. Sixty-six percent of them used terms such as "excellent" and "brilliant" to describe the effects. Additionally, partners and support people reported feeling involved and useful, seeing themselves as having an important role in the birth.

"Initially, although pleased with the positive feedback I was receiving from couples, as an Acupuncturist I considered that Acupuncture would be the preferred method of promoting pain relief during labor," said Ms. Betts. "It wasn't until I used Acupressure during the birth of my second child that I understood just what the feedback I had been receiving really meant."

It was the continuing feedback that she received from both midwives and couples that brought her to the conclusion that Acupressure is the superior tool for providing pain relief during labor.

"I am convinced that for a birth without complications, Acupressure is the preferred option for analgesia (pain control), coming from my own experiences, as well as the feedback of others. It is my hope that Acupressure will become a routine part of prenatal education."

Ms. Betts provides a simple, easy to use booklet outlining the eight suggested points to use on a woman during labor. The booklet can be downloaded at <http://acupressure.rhizome.net.nz/acupressure/download.aspx>.