



# Lightstreams Chiropractic Care Pte. Ltd.

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## **Chiropractic Care during the Childbearing Years**

~Dr. Nancy Anne Schrauth, D.C. (USA)

Now that you are pregnant, are you wondering how your body is going to cope with the challenge of carrying all that extra weight in front of you? Childbearing is assumed to be a normal part of a woman's life, and although it is a normal physiological process it is sometimes treated like a state of disease. You may not be as well prepared for childbearing as you would be starting a new job or learning how to play an instrument or a sport. Yet the process would be much easier if you were prepared properly. Prior to and during pregnancy, chiropractic care can help you prepare your body for the challenge of childbearing and delivery. This physical preparation will give you confidence and control during pregnancy and help speed up your post-natal recovery.

Adjustments help restore normal nerve function from the brain and spinal cord to the rest of the body. This allows optimal function of the entire body, and will lead to proper hormonal balance, a strong immune system, and efficient digestion. A healthy nervous system ensures the organs of reproduction are receiving proper nerve stimulation, as well as strong blood circulation. The blood supply to the uterus and placenta carries all the nutrients and oxygen your growing foetus needs to develop properly. In some cases, chiropractic adjustments have even been known to facilitate conception.

Adjustments will ease the stress and strain on your body, which is accommodating the weight of your growing foetus. As the foetus grows, the curve in your lower back increases to accommodate the added weight. This puts more of the weight bearing force into the joints at the base of your spine. Lower back pain is just one of various mechanical stresses your body is more vulnerable to during pregnancy. The rapid physical changes during pregnancy can challenge even the healthiest women, and if you have had any kind of joint problem, especially in the lower back, you may experience a recurrence or worsening of that condition.

After childbirth is another time there is a higher risk of musculoskeletal stress. The hormone "relaxin", which helped you during delivery, will still be in your system for about 3 months. You then have all the work of caring for a new baby, which includes a lot of bending, lifting and carrying, of not just the baby, but all the gear too. Getting the baby in and out of the car seat is a challenge for even the strongest man.

During pregnancy each woman has her own needs and activity level. You may wish to continue working - sitting at a desk, standing in a lecture hall, or you may want to maintain a fairly strenuous athletic routine, or you may be working at home with other young children to care for. Chiropractic care will address your individual needs with treatment goals designed for your personal requirements.

Adjustments are carried out on tables designed to accommodate the expanding abdomen. I've had a number of patients, who were delighted to be able to lie face down, even during their later stages of pregnancy. Adjustments are very gentle, using little or no force. Devices, like blocks, activator instruments, or table positioning, are used, which take advantage of the softened ligaments and make the joints move quite easily. Manual soft tissue therapy can help relax and balance muscles that spasm in order to protect an over stretched joint. Ice packs may also be used to naturally decrease inflammation, relieve pain and help tighten overly stretched joints. Ice is also very effective in relieving the hot, burning, nerve pain of sciatica.

Exercise is very important, as it will strengthen the muscles surrounding the joints. This will protect the joints while the ligaments are softening to accommodate the enlargement of the pelvis. Exercise should be started sooner than later, even before the pregnancy, but it is never too late to

start. Even in the ninth month there are gentle exercises that are helpful. Chiropractors can evaluate your condition and instruct you in specific exercises that can help strengthen and protect the joints.

The goals of chiropractic treatment before, during, and after pregnancy, are primarily to minimize the musculoskeletal discomfort inherent in pregnancy. Adjustments help to maintain the highest level of biomechanical functioning in order to prevent or treat conditions like backaches, headaches, and leg pain. Chiropractic care goes hand in hand with all methods of pre-natal care and childbirth preparation. It is a safe, non-invasive, drug-free therapy, which can assist you throughout all the stages of your childbearing years.