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Benefits Of Chiropractic During Pregnancy

By: Dr. Stephen O'Neil

Dear Dr. Steve: What if any, are the benefits of being adjusted during pregnancy? Is it safe for pregnant mothers to receive full chiropractic treatments? At what time during the pregnancy should someone start being adjusted? B.S. Belle River

Dr. Steve: I will answer this three part question in reverse order. First of all, a woman should be examined by a chiropractor and adjusted if necessary, as early as possible during pregnancy. When a woman becomes pregnant, her body begins producing and releasing hormones, which cause laxity in the joints. This laxity or increase in motion happens in preparation for the pelvis to expand during delivery. These hormones, however, affect all the joints in the body including the spinal intervertebral joints making pregnant women more susceptible to spinal misalignments. This is compounded by the change in body mechanics as a woman's weight distribution changes. When misalignments occur in the spine, it causes inflammation in the joints. This inflammation puts pressure on the spinal nerves exiting the spine. These nerves are what control and direct every function in the body. This becomes twice as important during pregnancy because the nervous system is then not only responsible for the mother's daily functions such as digestion, respiration and movement, it is also in full control of directing the growth and formation of the fetus. This function is extremely complex and directly affects how the fetus develops.

This is where chiropractic comes. By aligning the spine and removing any interference on the central nervous system, it promotes proper function, optimal growth and overall health. The second part of the question refers to safety issues. There are almost no risks associated with adjusting pregnant women, provided there aren't some underlying conditions that make it a high risk pregnancy. In a healthy pregnant woman, there are no greater risks than with a normal everyday chiropractic treatment. The techniques used will be limited only by the patient's increasing size, shape and decreasing comfort as pregnancy progresses.

The first question asked, "What are the benefits of chiropractic during pregnancy?" Beyond the benefits already stated, it has also been shown in many studies that chiropractic care can greatly reduce duration of labour and decrease labour pains. It isn't surprising that a properly aligned pelvis with fully movable pelvic joints would have an easier time opening than a poorly aligned, restricted pelvis. Having an optimally functioning nervous system to both control and direct contractions can only help things progress normally.

Chiropractic, when combined with proper stretching techniques and a proper mindset, can contribute to a much smoother and quicker delivery. When combined with a nutritious diet and exercise program, chiropractic can make for a happier, healthier pregnancy and a much greater comfort level throughout its duration. See your Chiropractor for a spinal check-up and a central nervous system boost.