



PREGNANCY MASSAGE

I am sure many women will agree with me when I say there is no better time to be massaged and pampered than when you are pregnant.

Pregnancy massage refers to massage during the antenatal and postnatal periods. The massage technique is specifically designed to enhance the well-being of expectant mums, ensuring treatments are tailored to the individuals needs.

Not only is a pregnancy massage highly relaxing, it can provide expectant mums with relief from muscular aches, pains and tiredness. Recent studies have shown that women who receive regular massage throughout their pregnancies tend to have shorter labours with fewer complications. Those who received massage at least twice a week before delivery had lower levels of stress hormones, which reduced their risk of premature delivery and postnatal depression.

The method of pregnancy massage addresses the discomforts associated with pregnancy and aims to relax muscle tension and improve blood circulation, improving nourishment to both mother and baby. It has a range of benefits including improvement in posture, helping to reduce swelling in the hands and feet, reduce the appearance of stretch marks and prepare the body for childbirth. In addition, a relaxing massage has been found to help alleviate the common problem of insomnia during pregnancy.

There are several comfortable positions in which to receive pregnancy massage. Treatment may be carried out on a massage bed in a semi-reclining and side lying position, or in a variety of positions using beanbags and pillows for support. Some therapists may use various types of equipment with holes in the middle to accommodate a pregnancy bump, enabling the expectant mum to lie on her front. Some women are concerned that their bumps will be left 'dangling'. However, padding and support is used at all times to making sure no strain is caused, ensuring the comfort and safety of mother and baby at all times. Many pregnant women find the concept of being able to lie on their fronts highly relaxing, and some state that they would pay to simply lie on the bed!

Massage can be enjoyed throughout all three trimesters, but it is important to use a therapist with a specific pregnancy massage qualification, as they will have received training beyond the national standards of massage therapists. Therapists specialising in pregnancy massage know which specific areas of the body to concentrate on and which to avoid. They are aware of complications of pregnancy and have received special training in how to alleviate certain ailments, ensuring the best possible care for both

mother and baby. Please note that if there is a history of miscarriage or any spotting, massage should be avoided until the second trimester.

I encourage women to resume their massage routine as quickly as possible, although abdominal massage should not be performed until after the six week check.

Postnatal massage can help restore the body to its pre-pregnancy state, helping to reduce the appearance of stretch marks and improving skin tone, reducing water retention and increasing circulation – thereby speeding up the healing process.

It is important to note that pregnancy massage is not a replacement for prenatal care.

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