

# Your Spinal Health Questions Answered

with Dr Debbie Saxton

**Dear Debbie**

***I read with interest your first article and remember you mentioned your work with pregnant women, babies and children. Could you give me some more information on what and how you work in this area as I am now 4 months pregnant and am very interested in care for myself through the pregnancy and for my baby after it is born? Mrs P, aged 26.***

Congratulations! What a very exciting, if not a little daunting time for you. I was so pleased to read your letter as it gives me an opportunity to educate you and others into the benefit of chiropractic care through pregnancy and beyond.

Your body will be going through changes on a daily basis, this is reflected in a complete change of posture especially for your low back joints and this is often associated with low back pain or pubic pain through the pregnancy. This tends to worsen as you progress through the months.

Chiropractic is a gentle, safe and effective way of relieving these symptoms as well as preparing your body, especially your pelvic joint alignment for delivery. This can dramatically speed up delivery times and that often decreases the need for invasive interventions through labour. All techniques are adapted for the pregnant state, making them safe and comfortable for mum and baby. Pain relief techniques for labour are also taught and partners are very welcome to attend a session and learn these.

After the baby is born it is so important to have a thorough neurological check-up within the first 6 weeks of life. Birth can be very traumatic for the baby, being on the inside of every contraction can have some very negative effects on the function of the babies immature nervous system. At the first session we do all the regular baby checks such as height, weight and head circumference as well as all relevant developmental scales including age specific reflexes, we also do a full chiropractic assessment of the movement of the cranial bones, upper neck and pelvic joints, if necessary extending the examination to the limb range of movements. Any force applied is no more than you would apply to your eye ball and some babies sleep through the examination.

It is worth mentioning at this time that paediatric chiropractic care is a highly specialised



area and there are very few practitioners working with small babies. I have been working in the area for 9 years now after following a Masters level training in the subject. I would encourage anyone thinking of having their baby or child checked to ensure they are seeking the opinion of someone who is familiar with working with that age group. They are not little adults!

Well baby checks are done 5 times in the first year of life and if problems are found they will be discussed and treated until resolved. The commonest complaints I see babies for are sleeplessness, colic, feeding problems, reflux, constipation and flat spots on the heads. All these conditions respond very well and usually very quickly to care.

Good luck with the next 5 months and then the rest of your life as a mum! I hope to see you in the clinic and help you and your baby get the best possible experience.

*Debbie Saxton*

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