

**Ian Whyte D.O.**  
**Kirsten Nottrot D.O.**  
**Rebecca Podmore BSc (Ost) Hons. BA**  
**Rachel Griffin BSc (Ost) Hons. Dip PGO**

## **Registered Osteopaths**

Established 1978.



19, Lichfield Street.  
Stone.  
Staffs.  
ST15 8NA  
Tel: 01785 816481.

Castlefields Surgery.  
Castle Way.  
Castlefields.  
Stafford.  
ST16 1BS  
Tel: 01785 248298

[www.staffs-osteopaths.co.uk](http://www.staffs-osteopaths.co.uk)

# PREGNANCY and Osteopathy



The aim of this small leaflet is to explain to you something about the state of pregnancy and how osteopathy can help.

Pregnancy can and should be an amazing experience but it can also have its problems and it is possible you may never have associated Osteopathy with the state of pregnancy but, in fact, the use of an Osteopath can be very beneficial.

In a nine month pregnancy the body undergoes a vast degree of change during a relatively short time. The degree of change is not just physical either: there are the psychological adjustments necessary to adapt to the needs of a new baby who dominates your every waking minute! There are the financial adjustments in your budget, the adapting of the place where you live, the potential rivalries or jealousies with other members of the household, and so the list goes on!

It's no wonder then that there are all sorts of aches and pains that appear in different parts of the body, but there are good reasons for many of these symptoms.

It's worthwhile remembering that there is a hormone being released all the way through the pregnancy (Relaxin) which is responsible for the relaxation of the ligaments throughout the body. This hormone is particularly released during the later stages to prepare for the passage of the baby through the birth canal, but the fact that it is also released earlier on explains why the ligaments are less able to take the strain of the postural changes which take place as the shape and weight of the body changes.

It is inevitable that there will be a weight gain during the nine months and for some that gain

may be quite considerable and because most of the weight goes to the front, means that the centre of gravity of the body is changing very rapidly by moving forward. Consequently the low back becomes very arched and this can put strain on the little hinge joints of the spine (facet joints) which aren't really designed for weight bearing. The low back tends to sag into a hollow as the muscles go tight from trying to hold yourself upright resulting in a nagging back ache which won't go away. In some cases there may even be nerve irritation giving some pain down one, or occasionally, both legs. This is not due to the baby lying on a nerve as is sometimes suggested, as the foetus is, in fact, a long way from the mother's sciatic nerve.



Osteopathic treatment can often help these aches and pains and together with some gentle exercise, can frequently make this part of the pregnancy much more bearable and enjoyable.

Another common problem during pregnancy is a deep ache across the shoulders and base of the neck. This is all part of the postural changes that are taking place, but can also be a sign of some

of the stresses that you might be feeling as you think of the responsibility that you are taking on by bringing a new child into the world. Osteopathy has a good track record in dealing with these sorts of problems.

The birth of the child however does not necessarily mean that all the aches and pains magically disappear! It would be wonderful if that was the case, but the baby has to be fed, lifted, carried, dressed, and have endless nappy changes which can all put additional strain on your musculoskeletal system.

There are many ways in which your Osteopath can help, not just with treatment, but by advising you on the best ways to lift and carry and cope with any additional stresses which you might be experiencing through the first few exciting years of having a child. In fact, Osteopathy may be able to help your stress symptoms when the baby grows up and wants to borrow the car for the first time!

If you have any further questions regarding pregnancy that have not been covered here, or in fact anything to do with how Osteopathy could help you, then please feel free to ring either of the practices to speak to one of the Osteopaths in attendance.