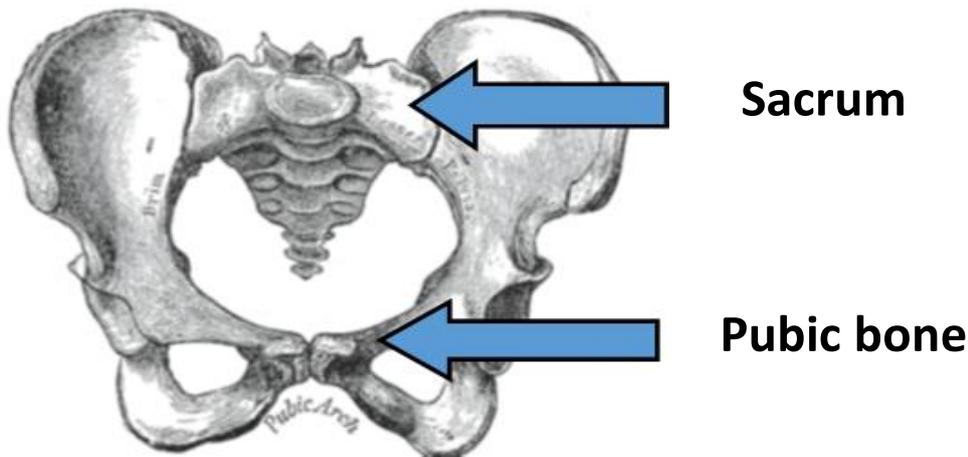


Pelvic Girdle Pain

This leaflet offers more information about pregnancy related pelvic girdle pain. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to the staff member in charge of your care.

What is pelvic girdle pain and why have I got it?

Pelvic girdle pain is the name given to pain in the pelvic area or lower back.



Pelvic girdle pain (PGP) is very common in pregnancy and / or after giving birth – it is experienced by about 45% of pregnant women and 25% of women who have given birth.

A physiotherapist, doctor or midwife should be able to identify your symptoms and give you advice and treatment.

PGP is not dangerous and won't affect your baby.

We don't know the exact cause of PGP, but the following things seem to affect it:

- Hormonal changes – during pregnancy a hormone called relaxin makes the ligaments supporting your pelvic joints more flexible in preparation for labour. This can contribute to your symptoms especially during the first and last trimester.
- Weight gain – your weight naturally increases as you progress through your pregnancy causing more load through the front of your pelvis.

- Muscle activity – during pregnancy the muscles around the pelvis work harder to support the weight of the baby. If you do not have the required strength, this can add to your symptoms.
- Posture – as your baby becomes heavier your posture can change putting more load through your pelvic joints and low back.

What are the signs and symptoms?

Pain is the most common symptom and can be mild, moderate or severe. It can start at any point during your pregnancy or in the weeks after giving birth and is most often felt across your lower back, bottom, groin, inner thighs and hips.

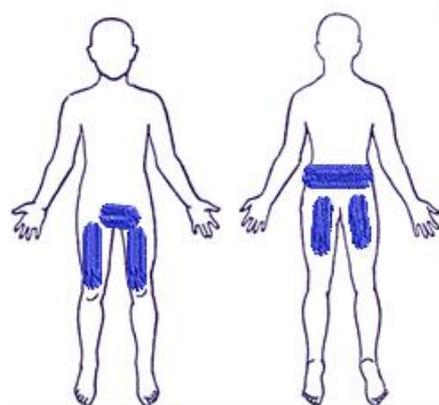
Other symptoms may include:

- clicking, locking and grinding
- feeling that your pelvic joints are more mobile
- pain in your hips when sleeping or moving.

You may have difficulty with some activities, such as:

- walking, especially for long periods
- climbing stairs
- turning over in bed or sleeping comfortably
- getting dressed or putting on your shoes and socks
- getting in and out of a car or on and off a bed
- standing on one leg to put on your trousers
- sex.

Common areas of pelvic girdle pain:



Do I need any tests to confirm the diagnosis?

Pelvic girdle pain can be assessed and diagnosed by your physiotherapist, GP or midwife.

What treatments are available?

Treatment may include:

Pacing your day – try to plan your diary and daily activities so that you are not doing too much or too little on one day. Also, try to take the weight of your baby off your pelvis by resting once or twice a day for at least half an hour. In more severe cases, your physiotherapist may recommend a longer time.

Ice – an ice pack in a damp towel lightly applied over the painful joint may help. Make sure you have full skin sensation before putting the ice on and don't leave it on for more than 10 minutes. Repeat throughout the day as required.

Heat – a hot water bottle or wheat pack applied over the buttock area will help to relax the muscles. Make sure you have full skin sensation before putting the pack or water bottle on and don't leave it on for more than 10 minutes. Repeat as often as required. Don't put heat directly onto pregnancy bump or pubic bone at the front.

Exercises – pelvic floor, gentle abdominal and buttock exercises will help strengthen the muscles supporting your pelvis. Your physiotherapist will be able to give you specific exercises.

Massage – gentle massage over the buttocks, inner thighs and lower back may help to ease muscular ache and reduce pain.

Medication – if your pain is severe, pain medications can be useful - seek advice from your GP about this.

Pelvic support belt – if the pain stops you from moving, a pelvic support belt may help. Ask your physiotherapist for guidance and advice as this may not be appropriate for everyone.

Useful sources of information

- Pelvic Obstetric and Gynaecological Physiotherapy – Pregnancy Related Pelvic Girdle Pain for new mothers and mothers to be
<https://pogp.csp.org.uk/publications/pregnancy-related-pelvic-girdle-pain-mothers-be-new-mothers>

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about pelvic girdle pain, please contact the Pelvic Health Physiotherapy Team on 020 8725 1333 (Monday to Friday). Out of hours, please leave a voicemail message and we will contact you as soon as possible.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings (near the lift foyer).

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

Web: www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency.

NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Tel: 111

AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all of our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.



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