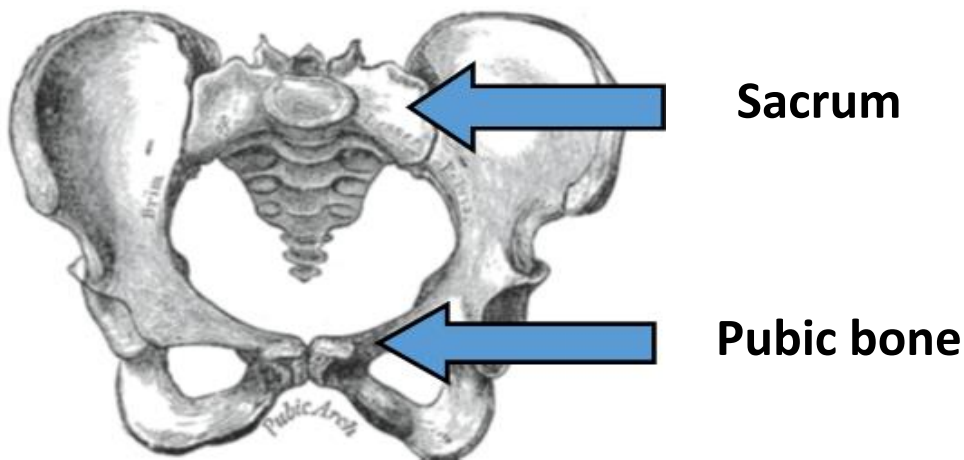


Pelvic Girdle Pain

This leaflet provides 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 during pregnancy. It is experienced by approximately 1 in 5 pregnant women. It is not dangerous and will not affect your baby. In a small percentage of women, PGP may persist after the birth of the baby, particularly when not managed appropriately.

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

The exact cause of PGP is unknown, but the following factors are likely to affect it:

- Hormonal changes – during pregnancy your body produces a hormone called relaxin which 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 throughout your pregnancy, increasing the 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 you progress throughout the pregnancy the position of your pelvis changes due to the growing baby. This increases the load through your pelvic joint and your lower back. As a result of this your muscles that attach to your pelvis can become shorter and tighter.
- Other influencing factors that are important to consider in relation to PGP are lack of sleep, stress/anxiety and depression.

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, pubic bone, inner thighs and hips.

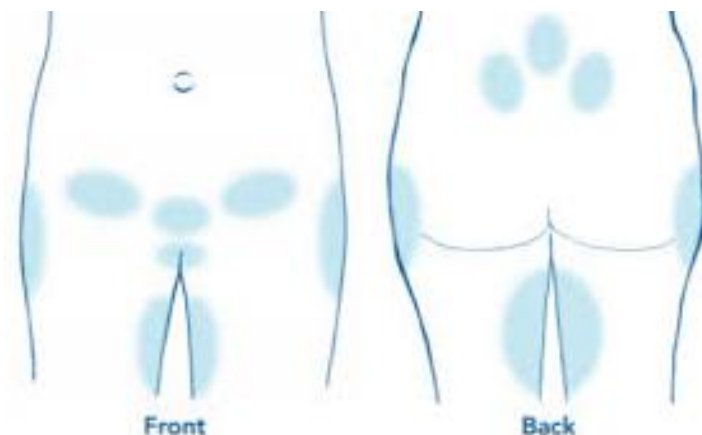
Other symptoms may include:

- 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
- standing on one leg when getting dressed or putting on your shoes and socks
- getting in and out of a car or on and off a bed
- 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.

Activity modification – keeping knees together when rolling or getting in and out of bed. Sitting down to get dressed and taking one step at a time when using the stairs.

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 on the pack or water bottle 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

Pregnancy Related Pelvic Girdle Pain and other common conditions in pregnancy: [Pregnancy Related Pelvic Girdle Pain and other common conditions in pregnancy | POGP \(thepogp.co.uk\)](http://thepogp.co.uk)

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about pelvic girdle pain, please contact the Pelvic Health Physiotherapy Team on 020 8725 1333 (voicemail only) which is checked regularly throughout the day Monday to Friday.

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 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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