

■ Evelyn & Rose Women's Health

Pelvic Girdle Pain (PGP) in Pregnancy

■ What Is Pelvic Girdle Pain?

Pelvic Girdle Pain (PGP) refers to pain around the joints of the pelvis — including the symphysis pubis at the front and the sacroiliac joints at the back. It affects up to 1 in 5 pregnant women and can range from mild discomfort to significant pain that limits movement. PGP occurs when pregnancy hormones, especially relaxin, loosen the ligaments supporting the pelvis, causing joint instability and uneven movement.

■ Common Symptoms

- Pain in the front of the pelvis, lower back, hips, or thighs
- Clicking or grinding sensations in the pelvic area
- Pain during walking, turning in bed, climbing stairs, or standing on one leg
- Difficulty separating legs (e.g. getting in/out of car or bath)
- Pain that worsens with activity and improves with rest

■ Diagnosis

Diagnosis is made clinically by your obstetrician or physiotherapist based on symptoms and physical examination. Imaging is rarely required unless another cause is suspected.

■ Management and Relief Strategies

The goal is to reduce pain, improve mobility, and protect the joints during pregnancy.

1■■ Physiotherapy & Exercise

- A women's health physiotherapist can teach strengthening and stabilising exercises for the core, hips, and pelvic floor.
- Gentle stretching under supervision may reduce stiffness.
- Avoid high-impact exercise and prolonged standing.

2■■ Activity Modification

- Keep knees together when turning in bed or getting out of the car.
- Sit to dress instead of standing on one leg.
- Avoid heavy lifting or pushing objects.
- Take shorter steps and avoid uneven surfaces.
- Use a pillow between your knees when sleeping.

3■■ Pelvic Support Belts

A maternity support belt or pelvic brace can stabilise joints and reduce discomfort. These should be fitted by a professional for maximum benefit.

4■■■ Pain Relief

- Ice packs may help relieve discomfort.
- Paracetamol can be used safely when needed.
- Always check with your healthcare provider before taking any medications.

5■■■ Hydrotherapy & Movement

Gentle water-based exercise (like walking or floating) can ease joint pressure. Avoid breaststroke if it increases pain.

6■■■ Posture & Ergonomics

- Maintain upright posture with back support.
- Avoid sitting cross-legged or standing on one leg.
- Use supportive footwear and avoid high heels.

■ Tips for Daily Comfort

Activity	Helpful Adjustments
Walking	Take smaller steps, wear supportive shoes, avoid uneven ground.
Sleeping	Place a pillow between your knees and under your bump.
Household tasks	Avoid twisting or lifting; pace yourself and take rest breaks.
Work	Take regular breaks from sitting or standing; use ergonomic chairs.
Driving	Avoid long drives; use a rolled towel for lumbar support.

■■■■ After Birth

PGP typically improves within weeks after delivery, though some women may experience mild ongoing symptoms. Continue physiotherapy exercises to restore strength and alignment. Seek review if pain persists or worsens.

■■ When to Seek Help

Contact your healthcare provider if you:

- Cannot walk due to pain
- Have sudden swelling or severe pain
- Experience fever or urinary symptoms (to rule out infection)

■ Key Takeaway

Pelvic Girdle Pain is common in pregnancy and can be managed effectively with early support, physiotherapy, and lifestyle adjustments. Most women recover fully after birth.

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