

## Health and Fitness Back Pain and Morning Sickness

Written by Valecia Weeks, CPT, LMT  
Wednesday, 07 December 2011 16:15

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### Back Pain & Massage

Did you know that in your lifetime, you may be one of the 70 to 85 % of individuals who experience back pain? Whether this pain is from overwork in a yoga class, long term pain from an old injury, or just fatigued back muscles from trying to keep up with the young'uns on the basketball court...back pain is back pain.

Causes of back pain. The cause of back pain can be the result of several factors. Stress is probably the No. 1 enemy. When we are stressed our shoulders tend to roll forward and move up to our ears. The neck seems to just disappear. The back tightens so badly that it comes up with its very own new posture. If the muscles of the back flex too badly, the results of the misalignment can affect internal organs.

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In addition to stress, poor posture, bad ergonomics, lack of exercise, arthritis, osteoporosis, a sedentary lifestyle, overexertion, pregnancy, kidney stones, fibromyalgia, excess weight, and more can contribute to pain.

Never fear...massage is here. Massage offers hope to those who suffer from back pain. There is no easy answer for chasing the pain away. Some individuals have found that physical therapy, chiropractic, and acupuncture have proven to be effective in treating their back pain. Massage therapists have effectively treated lower back pain for quite some time now. The procedures they use are far less expensive and invasive than other treatments.

Some research has found that massage is more effective at treating low-back pain than medicines. The participants in the study received massage once a week for about 10 weeks and most of them reported that their back pain had improved and the improvement was still present six months after the study. Researchers have also shown that massage can improve the quality of sleep, improve range of motion, and help with depression and anxiety that often goes along with back pain.

**Benefits of Massage.** One can benefit from massage in a variety of ways but when it comes to managing back pain, there are some specific benefits that can result from consistent massage:

**Improved circulation.** With increased circulation comes faster recovery time for sore, overworked muscle tissues. Increased release of endorphins. The prevalence of these natural

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painkillers is boosted every time you have a massage. This can only help in managing pain.

Improved movement. Range of motion and flexibility both get a boost with massage. Increased relaxation. When you relax, your muscles relax, thereby calming the pain.

When it comes to back pain, there are a lot of options out there. Ultimately, massage and its benefits might be a viable answer. For back pain sufferers, massage can work wonders. Massage can help relax the body, relax the psychiatric state, and improve a client's range of motion and circulation to the affected areas. Not only can massage help directly with the pain, but it can also make life a little easier, too.

For more questions on the benefits of therapeutic massage, contact Valecia Weeks at [assuringhands@massagetherapy.com](mailto:assuringhands@massagetherapy.com)

**Ulysses W. Watkins, Jr., M.D.**

**“Health Notes”**

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### Morning Sickness

#### GENERAL INFORMATION

**DEFINITION:** Nausea during pregnancy. This usually occurs in the morning but may occur at any time. Most pregnant women experience at least mild morning sickness.

**BODY PARTS INVOLVED:** Muscles of the intestinal tract; vomiting center in the hypothalamus gland.

**SEX OR AGE MOST AFFECTED:** Pregnant women.

**SIGNS & SYMPTOMS:** Mild to severe nausea- with or without vomiting – usually during the first 12 to 14 weeks of pregnancy.

**CAUSES:**

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Major hormone changes that take place to permit normal growth of the fetus. Progesterone and other hormones cause involuntary muscles to relax, probably slowing movement of food through the stomach and intestines. They may also affect the vomiting center of the brain. In addition, blood sugar is lower during early pregnancy in many women, contributing to gastrointestinal upsets.

RISK INCREASES WITH: Unknown.

HOW TO PREVENT: No specific preventive measures.

WHAT TO EXPECT

DIAGNOSTIC MEASURES

- Your own observation of symptoms.
- Medical history and physical exam by a doctor.

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### APPROPRIATE HEALTH CARE

- Self-care after diagnosis.
- Doctor's treatment, if morning sickness becomes disabling.

**POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS:** Hyperemesis gravidarum, a condition of pregnancy characterized by severe nausea, vomiting, weight loss and electrolyte disturbance (rare).

**PROBABLE OUTCOME:** Usually stops after first 3 to 4 months of pregnancy.

### HOW TO TREAT

#### GENERAL MEASURES

- Keep rooms well ventilated to prevent accumulation of cooking odors or cigarette smoke.
- Don't smoke cigarettes, and ask your family and friends not to smoke while you are experiencing morning sickness.

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- Keep a positive attitude. If you have conflicts that you cannot resolve, ask for help from family, friends or professional counselors.
- Keep a daily record of your weight.

**MEDICATION:** Medicine is usually not necessary for this disorder. Don't take any medications during pregnancy without consulting your doctor. Your doctor may prescribe a trial of vitamin B-6, which appears safe at the present.

**ACTIVITY:** No restrictions.

**DIET:** The following may help to minimize nausea:

- Place a small, quick-energy snack, such as soda crackers, at your bedside. Eat it before getting up in the morning.

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- Eat a small snack at bedtime and when you get up to go to the bathroom during the night.
  
- Eat a snack as often as every hour or two during the day. Avoid large meals. Snacks should consist of high-protein foods, such as peanut butter on apple slices or celery; nuts; a quarter sandwich; cheese and crackers; milk, cottage cheese; yogurt sprinkled with granola; and turkey and chicken slices. Avoid foods that are high in fat and salt and low in nutrition.

### CALL YOUR DOCTOR IF

- You have morning sickness that does not improve, despite the above measures.
  
- You vomit blood or material that resembles coffee grinds.
  
- You lose more than 1 or 2 pounds.