



Patient Information

LOOKING AFTER YOUR BACK: Back care for Parents looking after Toddlers

Caring for toddlers can be very physically demanding on your body. Back and pelvic pain is relatively common during the child bearing year(s) due to the many hormonal and physical changes that occur. These include: the increased load on the pelvis from the growing baby and vaginal birth; the hormonal changes promoting pelvic joint mobility; altered posture; weakened and stretched abdominal and pelvic floor muscles; and the altered demands on spinal, pelvic and hip muscles.

What is Back and Pelvic Pain?

Pain felt in your back and pelvis may occur suddenly or it may be persistent. Altered patterns of activity in any of the muscles attaching to, and controlling the back and pelvis can contribute to poor support, and increased strain on the bones, muscles, ligaments and nerves of the pelvis and back during simple activities. Pain in the back and pelvis can become debilitating and make it difficult to care for your toddler.



What is the possible cause of Back and Pelvic Pain in parents with Toddlers?

- Frequent lifting of toddlers and prams.
- Carrying your child
- Bending and twisting when lifting your toddler
- Getting babies and children into and out of the car
- Weakened pelvic floor and abdominal muscles

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If you are experiencing pelvic pain or back pain during your pregnancy or after, it is important to avoid picking up your toddler (see tips below) as it will exacerbate your pain. A detailed physical examination, including a number of important clinical tests, can identify the specific combination of muscular imbalances that may be present. By identifying the unique combination of motor-control imbalances around the back and pelvic girdle, the physiotherapist can design an individualized rehabilitation program to retrain back and pelvic girdle control and optimize recovery.

Here are a few tips to assist you in avoiding picking up your toddler:

Encourage your toddler to be more independent

- Assist your toddler to climb in and out of the bath and high chair by holding onto their hands.
- Place a chair/stool beside the cot (with the side down) and whilst holding their hands get them to climb onto the chair/stool then into the cot and vice versa when getting out.
- Help them into the car by assisting from behind with a hand under their bottom when getting in and out of the car (eg. climb onto the floor, onto the seat, and then into the car seat).

Get down to their level

- Instead of picking your child up to cuddle/console, squat down or kneel down
- Sit on the couch and ask your child to climb up for a cuddle.
- Try changing nappies on the floor with a mat, or kneeling in front of your bed, instead of lifting them to the change table.



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Establish regular “quiet” time

- Try to establish a regular daily “quiet” time with your toddler (eg. both resting on the bed “reading” a book).
- ❖ This information is a general overview of non-specific back and pelvic pain. It is not intended to be diagnostic and must be considered in conjunction with the individual’s complete medical history and a comprehensive physical examination. Individuals with pain should contact their doctor and / or the Australian Physiotherapy Association to find a local physiotherapist to assist with their management.

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