

LOWER BACK SPASMS

I am 38 weeks' pregnant and had been feeling great. Five days ago I felt a pop in my spine, and my lower back went into spasm. It's very sore and keeps going into spasm with any sudden movement. HELP!

A muscle spasm is the involuntary shortening of a muscle, and can happen when your muscles are under stress. This type of injury is common at this stage, with your body coping with enlarged breasts preparing to feed, and your bump at almost maximum size. Get into your physio ASAP for some safe mobilisations of the affected area to ease out stiff joints and reduce the muscle spasm. In the meantime, applying heat to the area (never over your bump) will give great relief. Your physio will give you some gentle stretching exercises to fully resolve the problem.



RIB PAIN DURING PREGNANCY

I am 34 weeks' pregnant and my ribs on the right side have been hurting for a week, especially when I'm sitting at my desk. Is there anything I can do to ease this?

Your ribcage expands as your pregnancy progresses to make room for your growing baby and to maintain your lung capacity.

This puts pressure on the ribs causing pain. It can be further compounded if your baby likes to kick into the already aching area.



Try these tips to ease rib pain!

- * Practice deep breathing exercises while sitting comfortably.
- * Inhale deeply through the nose, hold for three seconds and exhale out of the mouth.
- * Repeat five times every few hours.
- * Stretch by getting onto your hands and knees and rolling your hips towards your right heel and then towards your left heel in a circular motion.
- * Do five circles slowly in each direction.
- * *Discontinue if your wrists get sore in this position.*



Jenny Branigan is a chartered physiotherapist and partner at Total Physio in Sandyford, Co Dublin, and sees many women during and after pregnancy, treating issues like pelvic girdle pain. She is also mum to Jamie and Holly. Jenny runs pregnancy pilates courses through Total Physio. For more information see www.totalphysio.ie

These answers are not a substitute for a full assessment by your chartered physiotherapist. If you are suffering with any pain or injury, please contact your local chartered physiotherapist who specialises in treating pregnant and postnatal women. It is vital to deal promptly with these aches and pains and they will only get worse as your bump and baby get bigger and heavier.