

# *Pregnancy Massage: Benefits and Precautions*

## *'Happy Mom, Healthy Baby!'*

Massage has many benefits during and after pregnancy. A therapist with specialized training will provide you the expertise and assistance in this very important time in life.

### **Summary of Benefits:**

- Relief of hip, back & neck discomfort
- Decreased stress
- Reduced swelling
- Increased maternal hormone production
- Easier labor with fewer complications
- Healthier baby
- Improved recovery after delivery

As you share your body with your developing child, you can also share the comforting benefits that prenatal massage brings to body, mind and spirit. Massage increases circulation, relaxes muscles, enhances the immune system, reduces stress and alleviates fatigue. Health scores of babies are higher as newborns.

**First Trimester.** Massage techniques during the first trimester are similar to any massage with the goal being relaxation, pain relief, etc. Special positioning is not an issue and abdominal massage is not done. Fragrances and aromatherapy are avoided for moms with morning sickness. Measures are taken to avoid lower back, hip and leg discomfort that usually begin in the second trimester. Establish a partnership with Steve, RN and CMT to assist you through a healthy, comfortable and safe pregnancy.

**Second Trimester.** For pregnant women, soothing massage is an absolute essential. Moms usually feel well and have more energy during the second trimester but aches and pains progressively increase as your baby grows. Lower back and hip strain cause postural misalignment. Massage promotes physical, mental and emotional well being. Research from Univ. of Miami Touch Research Institute demonstrates that massage decreases tension, stress, anxiety and depression caused by pregnancy's hormonal changes.

**Third Trimester.** Pregnancy can take a toll on a woman's body. Increased back and hip pain, swollen legs, restlessness, fatigue, and headaches are common, especially as the due date approaches. Massage relieves aches, pains and cramps in the hips, back and leg muscles. Swelling is decreased in the arms and legs. Stress levels and anxiety are significantly lessened with massage therapy. As your baby grows and you approach your due

date, your joints begin to loosen from the relaxin hormone that prepares you for labor, but creates discomforts and feeling "loose" with movements. Therapists with special training will use massage techniques, stretching, along with an exercise plan to help prepare your pelvis and legs for labor and delivery. Steve Metzger, RN-CMT has certification in prenatal and perinatal massage therapy.

**Labor Preparation.** Massage therapy relaxes and provides flexibility to birthing muscles, and develops kinesthetic awareness for birthing. Many studies show that labor is shorter with fewer complications for massage clients and there is a lower incidence of C-sections. Massage improves the outcome of labor by preparing the pelvis and hip muscles, reducing stress levels and increasing the confidence and knowledge of Mom before labor starts. Massage during labor by a trained doula is also very effective in facilitating labor and delivery with fewer complications and medical interventions. Health scores of babies at delivery are higher when moms receive pregnancy massage (Brazelton Neonatal Assessment.)

**Post Pregnancy Recovery.** Massage therapy after delivery helps with physical and emotional adjustments. It helps restore body to its pre-pregnancy condition, re-establishes pelvic structural integrity, supports healthy lactation, reduces stress hormones, and facilitates healing of bladder disorders, post-episiotomy soreness, and C-section. Massage relieves neck, shoulder and back pain. Special exercises, massage techniques and advice are given to for abdominal muscle healing, scar tissue reduction, stretch mark treatment and infant massage. Therapist Steve Metzger, RN-CMT has advanced training in perinatal massage therapy will assist you in this transition.

**High Risk Pregnancy.** Pregnant moms with certain medical conditions may be classified as a "high risk pregnancy." Your medical practitioner can release high risk pregnant moms for massage therapy and often this can be very beneficial for a healthy and safe pregnancy and delivery. Massage therapy is known to reduce blood pressure, increase circulation, improve fetal nourishment, enhance glucose metabolism and balance your hormones promoting a healthier relaxed mom and baby. Steve Metzger has advanced prenatal and perinatal massage therapy training. As a registered nurse, he also has increased knowledge and experience with medical conditions to guide you in your pregnancy. He can work with your medical doctor, as directed.

Besides, Massage Just Feels Good Anytime!

**Safety and Pregnancy Massage.** Pregnancy is a time of transition in the body that brings joys as well as challenges. Most persons readily acknowledge that massage therapy is safe and effective for pain relief and relaxation—but what about for the pregnant mom?

- Will Baby be injured from massage?
- Can Mom lie on her stomach during massage?
- Is it safe to massage the abdomen?
- Can the legs be massaged during pregnancy?

**Benefits of Massage.** These are excellent questions because massage brings many benefits to Mom and Baby. Studies from the Touch Research Institute at the University of Miami show that massage therapy in pregnancy relieves stress, eliminates discomfort and results in healthier babies. Pregnant clients who receive massage therapy are more comfortable through labor and use fewer medications. They have shorter labor, reduced complications and fewer C-sections. Stress is reduced and depressed moms benefit from massage therapy.

**Safety Concerns.** The position of Mom during massage is very important to keep Baby safe and healthy during massage. Circulation can be compromised in certain common positions. Pregnant moms need specific treatment to the hips, back and legs but a trained therapist knows how to do this without causing damage to Baby or Mom. Caution is indicated with certain massage techniques, positioning of the pregnant mom during pregnancy and reflexology in the hands or feet. Therefore, it is essential that the therapist have specific training in prenatal and perinatal massage therapy.

**Important note:** Prenatal (pregnancy) and perinatal massage therapy does not replace prenatal health care by physicians, nurse midwives and midwives. These professionals are essential for maternal health and vital monitoring of the baby's health. Massage practitioners have a vital role supplementing medical care. Moms considered to have a high risk pregnancy should have medical clearance for massage therapy.

**Special Training is required** for safe, appropriate and effective massage during pregnancy. Steve Metzger, RN-CMT is one of five therapists in the Sacramento area who has a national certification for prenatal and perinatal massage therapy. With 30 years experience in health care he is equipped to safely and effectively treat you and guide you in this important time of your life.

**Steve Metzger, RN, CMT**  
*Therapist with Advanced Training*

*Certified Massage Therapist and Registered Nurse*  
*"Integrating Massage Techniques with Medical Knowledge"*

*(Steve is among a few select massage therapists in the Sacramento area with specialty certification in Pre and Perinatal Massage Therapy)*

Find Therapist Steve Metzger, RN, CMT in [Better Birth Sacramento website:](http://www.betterbirthsacramento.com/steve_metzger_rn_cmt.html)  
[http://www.betterbirthsacramento.com/steve\\_metzger\\_rn\\_cmt.html](http://www.betterbirthsacramento.com/steve_metzger_rn_cmt.html)

**Client Review:** *"Massage was one of my favorite ways to relax during my pregnancy. Steve demonstrated understanding of prenatal massage and wonderful technique. The heated therapies and stretches were gentle and effective. Steve showed a lot of concern for my comfort and personal preferences."* Anne

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