

osteopathic information service



osteopathy and patient protection

Osteopaths are trained to recognise and treat many causes of pain. Osteopathy is an established system of diagnosis and manual treatment, which is recognised by the British Medical Association as a discrete clinical discipline.

For the last sixty years, osteopaths have worked within a system of voluntary regulation that set standards of training and practice.

In 1993, osteopathy became the first major complementary health care profession to be accorded statutory recognition under the 1993 Osteopaths Act. This has culminated in the opening of the statutory register of osteopaths by the General Osteopathic Council in May 1998. Only those practitioners able to show that they have been in safe and competent practice of osteopathy will be allowed onto the register and in the future all osteopaths will be trained to the same high rigorous standards. All osteopaths will need to have medical malpractice insurance and to follow a strict code of conduct.

Patients will have the same safeguards as when currently they consult a doctor or dentist.

MR. A. SIMS
Date _____

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Oakspring
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17 MELBOURNE TERRACE
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osteopathy and pregnancy

For further information about other conditions osteopathy can help, please send a stamped addressed envelope to:

osteopathic information service

General Osteopathic Council
Osteopathy House
176 Tower Bridge Road
London SE1 3LU
Telephone: 020 7357 6655



website address

www.osteopathy.org.uk



osteopathy and pregnancy



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Pregnancy is a time when women are more aware of the workings of their body. It produces the largest postural change that a woman's body will undergo. For many years, osteopaths have used their skills to help relieve the aches and pains caused by weight and posture changes during and after pregnancy.

For many women pregnancy means having to cope with a whole range of symptoms from back pain to morning sickness. As the baby grows in the womb, its extra weight results in a changed centre of gravity and posture changes from week to week. This can lead to a variety of aches and pains. As breast weight increases, this also causes changes and pain may occur in the upper back and neck.



why osteopathy?

Osteopathic treatment through pregnancy is a wonderfully gentle way of helping the body adapt to the changes which are taking place.

The safety of mother and baby is the osteopath's first concern. After a thorough assessment, osteopathic treatment may help to relieve the aches and pains caused by growth in size of the baby and the accommodation of the mother to this.

Advice from your osteopath can help you to change your posture and learn to use your body correctly through pregnancy.

Osteopaths can also help to ease other side effects of pregnancy such as heartburn, indigestion, constipation and pain in the buttock, groin or leg (commonly called sciatica). Some patients, too, report reduced morning sickness after osteopathic treatment.



visiting an osteopath

When you visit an osteopath for the first time a full case history will be taken and you will be given an examination.

You will normally be asked to remove some of your clothing and to perform a simple series of movements. The osteopath will then use his or her highly developed sense of touch, called palpation, to identify any points of weakness or excessive strain throughout the body.

The osteopath may need additional investigations such as x-ray or blood tests. This will allow a full diagnosis and suitable treatment plan to be developed with you. Osteopathy is patient centred, which means the treatment is geared to you as an individual.



relief from...

- Low back and leg pain
 - Neck and shoulder pain
 - Discomfort around the thorax and indigestion
 - Wrist pain
 - Post natal problems of the pelvis
- Osteopathic treatment during pregnancy is not new. For many years, osteopaths have used their skills to help, employing a variety of gentle techniques to ease supporting muscles and ligaments. Every pregnancy is 'special'. Osteopaths focus on the mother as a person and take account of her emotional state and other factors as well as her physical condition. Treatment may be supplemented by exercises and other forms of self help which the osteopath may prescribe for the mother to do at home.

An osteopath can advise on positions in labour to help prevent back problems later. Pain relief techniques can also be shown to the mother and her partner or friend so that they can help during labour. After delivery it is advised that mother and child return for structural examination, advice and check ups and, if necessary, for treatment.



remember

- Osteopaths are skilled practitioners
 - Osteopaths deal with pain every day
 - Osteopaths can advise on good posture
 - Osteopaths may help relieve back and leg pain in pregnancy
 - Osteopaths can advise on pain relief during labour
- Return for advice and a check-up after delivery.



useful tips

- Look after your back during pregnancy. Take particular care when lifting and carrying – especially lifting or carrying other children. Do not carry a small child on one hip for any length of time. Ask your osteopath for appropriate exercises.
- If you stand for any length of time, keep your bottom 'tucked in' to reduce strain on the lower part of your spine.
- When sitting, use a cushion for support and don't sit with your legs crossed. Avoid twisting movements. These may cause torsional strain within the pelvis.
- Lying on your side in bed, place a pillow under 'the bump' to provide support and also put a pillow between your knees to prevent back strain.
- If you prefer to lie on your back, place pillows beneath your knees to keep them bent.
- Make sure all equipment (changing table, pushchair, pram etc.) is at a comfortable height for you.



what will it cost?

Most people consult an osteopath privately. Telephone local practices to find out about fees in your area.

An increasing number of osteopaths work with GP practices so that it may be possible for your doctor to refer you to an osteopath on the NHS.

Many private health insurance schemes give benefit for osteopathic treatment. Some companies will reimburse the total fee that you have paid to the osteopath, some only a percentage. Most companies require a GP or specialist referral. All insurance companies have help lines to explain your actual benefits and methods of claiming.