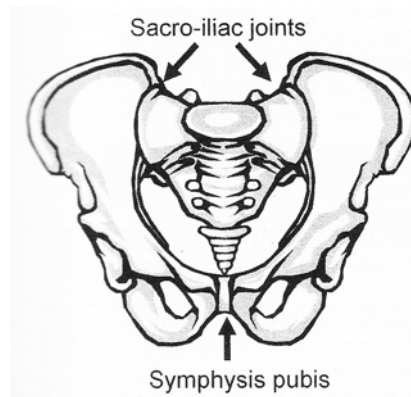


WHAT IS SPD? (PELVIC STRAIN)

By osteopath Caroline Penn DO (Hons) MSc MSCC

SPD or Symphysis Pubis Dysfunction is similar to groin strain suffered by footballers but usually much worse because the ligaments are softer and more easily stretched during pregnancy.

The pelvis is made up of three bones with three joints between them; two sacro-iliac joints at the back and one joint at the front called the symphysis pubis. It is this joint that is strained in SPD.



Pain can be felt anywhere in the pelvic region, low back, hips, thighs and groin. The pain is often worse for standing, walking - especially climbing stairs, getting out of the car and turning in bed.

Why does SPD occur?

Many authorities say that there is no known cause of SPD, but osteopaths, with their highly developed sense of touch can often find the cause. There should be a tiny amount of movement at each of the three pelvic joints. If the sacro-iliac joints at the back of the pelvis have been strained in the past and are not demonstrating this tiny amount of movement, then all the strain of adapting to the postural changes of the baby growing will be thrown onto the symphysis pubis at the front. The ligaments stretch beyond the normal limit destabilising the pelvis. This causes pain.

Previous trauma such as car accidents, falls and even sprained ankles, are often at the root of the problem. Previous pregnancies or a difficult birth can also be causative. Once these old problems have been dealt with the pelvis can work as a whole, the symphysis pubis settles down and the pain subsides. Treatment is safe during pregnancy and should be undertaken as soon as possible. The osteopath may not work on the symphysis pubis at all. Instead, using very gentle methods, old strains in other parts of the body, including the sacro-iliac area are resolved. The response to treatment can be quite dramatic. Patients can walk in on crutches and walk out without them.

Treatment

It is possible to treat SPD after pregnancy, although more treatments may be needed as the ligaments are no longer soft and the instability is more established. Nevertheless good results can be achieved, as described by the following case.

Tracey developed symptoms of SPD after pregnancy and a difficult labour. She was referred for a course of physiotherapy, but movement was still painful, as was walking and sleeping.

The physiotherapist recommended osteopathy. The osteopathic examination unravelled a series of problems which together resulted in SPD. The treatment was gentle and relaxing and after a few visits the symptoms began to ease. Walking became easier, sleep improved and Tracey was able to do something she had never thought possible – she was able to dance at her wedding!

About The Penn Clinic

With over 30 years' experience, The Penn Clinic gives you a range of treatments in safe, gentle hands. Our treatments are suitable for the whole family: Osteopathy, Pilates, Massage, Homeopathy, Counselling, Allergy treatment (NAET) and Autogenics. Our therapists work as a team with the osteopaths to provide a holistic approach to your problems. Full details are on our website www.pennclinic.co.uk

For information or to book an appointment, please contact us on: **01707 274 148**