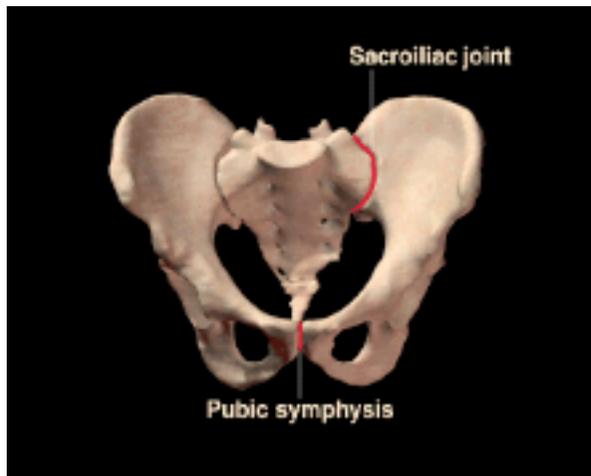


## What is SPD?

During pregnancy, the hormone relaxin softens and stretches the ligaments that bind the pelvic joints (symphysis pubis and sacroiliac) to provide the flexibility needed for giving birth (see diagram below).



Pelvis-anterior view

A small amount of movement at the symphysis pubis is normal, but in some women this joint may become unstable, causing too much movement in the pelvis. Because of the interconnected nature of the pelvic bones, instability at the symphysis pubis often also affects the sacroiliac joints, and vice versa.

Abnormal functioning of the pelvic joints is called Symphysis Pubis Dysfunction, or SPD. It may also be known as osteitis pubis, pelvic girdle pain, pelvic instability, diastasis symphysis pubis and others

## What are the symptoms of SPD?

*SPD is not the 'normal aches and pains of pregnancy'. Symptoms may occur during pregnancy and/or postnatally and beyond. You may experience one or more of these symptoms*

- \* Pain at the symphysis pubis joint, which can be extremely painful to the touch
- \* Pain in the groin and lower abdomen which may radiate down the thighs
- \* Pain in the lower back, especially around the sacroiliac joints.
- \* Spasms around the pelvic area that may cause intense pain
- \* Pain and difficulty parting the legs
- \* Pain and difficulty standing on one foot
- \* Pain and difficulty with walking, rolling over in bed, climbing stairs, driving etc.
- \* Difficulty starting to walk after sitting or sleeping
- \* Waddling gait (penguin walk)

Many cases of SPD are mild and will clear up completely when the baby is born, or within a few weeks of the birth.

## Who can experience SPD ?

- \* Women during pregnancy, following birth, or following repetitive movements
- \* Women and men following a previous injury
- \* Men injured playing contact sport

## What can I do about it?

You do not need to experience this distressing condition without appropriate help.

Seeking appropriate assistance early may go a long way towards alleviating many of the symptoms you are experiencing and assist in preventing SPD becoming long term.

Even mild symptoms of SPD can create difficulties with the most basic of everyday activities, especially when walking is painful. In more severe cases, walking aids such as crutches or a wheelchair may be necessary.

Ask your midwife or doctor for a referral to a physiotherapy department or a women's health physiotherapist who specialises in pelvic joint pain (SPD).

You may consider using the services of other physical therapy practitioners. It is important to make sure they are experienced and fully understand SPD.

## General tips:

- \* Rest
- \* Frequent rests and changes of activity and position may relieve stress on the joints.
- \* Try to avoid activities that cause or worsen pain.
- \* Keep your legs close together and parallel when moving, turning over in bed etc.
- \* Move slowly, avoiding sudden movements
- \* Avoid heavy lifting and twisting.
- \* Use a pelvic support e.g. maternity belt (see your midwife for options).
- \* Use a pillow between your knees (and under your tummy during pregnancy) when sleeping.
- \* Sit down to put on underwear, socks and pants.
- \* Use painkillers in moderation if necessary (see your midwife or doctor for advice).
- \* Ask for help. Friends and family are often your best resources. Your doctor can arrange home help for you if necessary
- \* SPD does not place women in the high risk category for birth. They may continue to choose home birth and water births. There is no risk to the baby.

## For More Information:

- \* Pregnancy and Birth
- \* Having your next baby
- \* Tips for Managing
- \* Information for Families
- \* Information for your Doctor and Midwife
- \* Osteitis and Men
- \* Diet, Exercise, Supplements and Drugs
- \* Disability Aids and Resources
- \* Register of Practitioners

available by email or send an A4 size SAE to:  
SPDNZ Resource Group: or

### Contact:

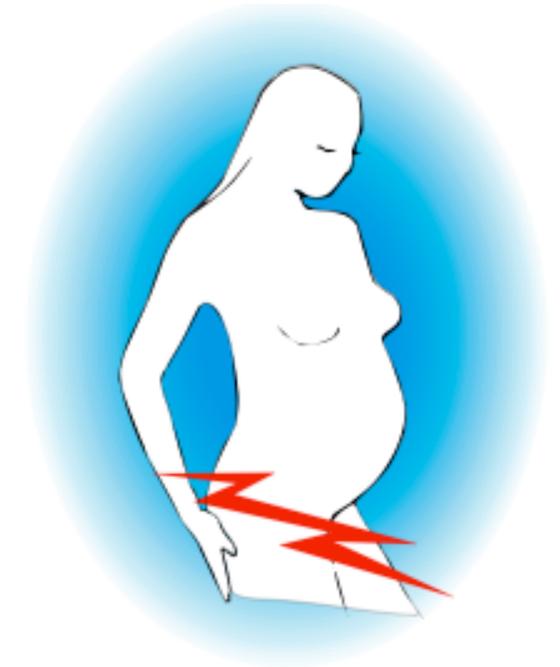
[SPD.info@ihug.co.nz](mailto:SPD.info@ihug.co.nz)

SPDNZ Resource Group:  
P.O. Box 508  
Drury 2247  
Auckland  
New Zealand

*Established by women who have experienced SPD to provide information to others with SPD.*

[www.pelvicjointpain.org.nz](http://www.pelvicjointpain.org.nz)

# PELVIC JOINT PAIN



SPDNZ RESOURCE GROUP

If you are pregnant, have recently given birth or have sustained an injury and are experiencing pain and difficulty with walking and movement you may have SPD (Symphysis Pubis Dysfunction).