

# Physiotherapy Wellbeing Classes



# Physiotherapy Service

- Maternity/Gynaecology/Neonatal Service
- Referral system
- Promote well-being!





An tOspidéal Náisiúnta Máthreachais  
The National Maternity Hospital

[Pregnancy and Birth](#)

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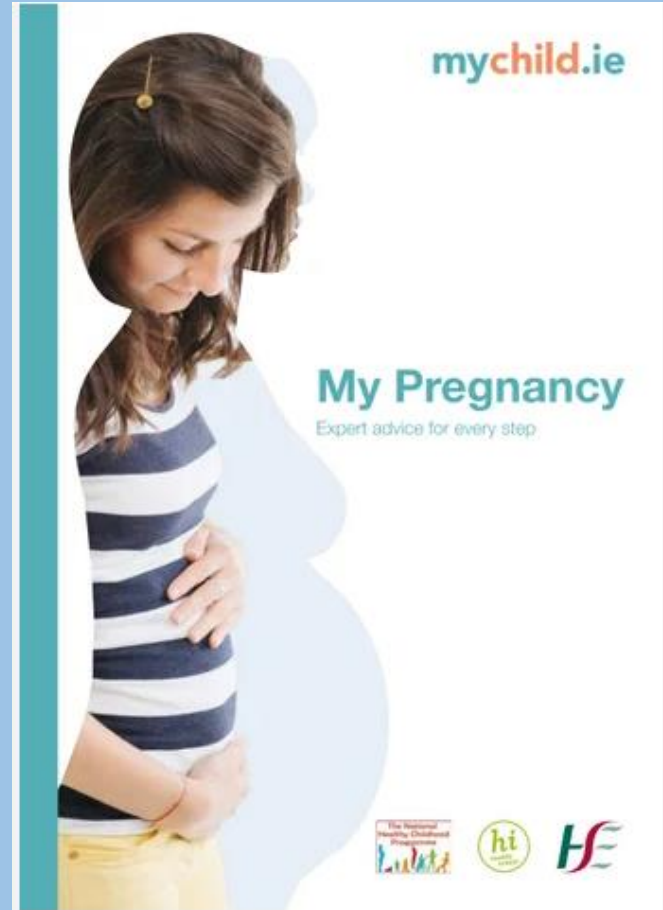
# Physiotherapy

# What will we cover today?

- *Exercise in Pregnancy*
- *Sleeping in Pregnancy*
- *Managing physical issues in Pregnancy*
- *Looking after our bladder, bowel & pelvic floor*
- *Looking after our abdominal support muscle*
- *Learning to work with our breath*
- *Q & A session*

# Resources

- My Pregnancy
- [https://assets.hse.ie/media/documents/HSE\\_My\\_Pregnancy\\_book.pdf](https://assets.hse.ie/media/documents/HSE_My_Pregnancy_book.pdf)





[Home](#) > [Pregnancy and Birth](#)

# Classes and Resources

Prepare for labour, birth, and early parenthood through antenatal classes, education sessions, and online e-learning modules.

# Physical activity for pregnant women



Helps to control weight gain



Helps reduce high blood pressure problems



Helps to prevent diabetes of pregnancy



Improves fitness



Improves sleep



Improves mood

**Not active?**  
Start gradually

**Already active?**  
Keep going



Do **muscle strengthening** activities twice a week

**Every activity counts**, in bouts of at least 10 minutes

**No evidence of harm**

**Listen to your body and adapt**



**Don't bump the bump**

UK Chief Medical Officers Recommendations 2017: Physical Activity in Pregnancy. [bit.ly/startactiveinfo](https://bit.ly/startactiveinfo)

## Why exercise?

- Improves your mood
- Improves oxygen flow to placenta
- Helps you manage your weight
- Reduces risk of increased blood pressure / gestational diabetes
- Helps you sleep
- Boosts energy levels
- Aids positioning

Table 1. Target heart rate zones for normal-weight pregnant women [24]

Maternal age	Target heart rate (bpm)
< 20 years	140 – 155
20 – 29 years	135 – 150
30 – 39 years	130 – 145
> 40 years	125 – 140

#### Additional **safety precautions/considerations:**



**Drink plenty of water** and ensure you meet your nutrition and energy needs.



**Avoid heat stress/hyperthermia.** Physical activity should preferably be done in a cool environment.



**Avoid physical activities at high altitude** (above 2000m) unless acclimatised and trained for the activity before pregnancy.



**Always wear appropriate shoes, non-restrictive clothing, and a supportive pregnancy-safe bra.** If it is hot, wear loose clothing made from 'breathable' fabric.

#### **TIP**

For a simple way to measure intensity – try the 'Talk Test'. You should be able to carry on a conversation during moderate intensity activities, but in vigorous intensity activities you'd find this difficult.





## Talk Test

This method allows you to gauge your exercise intensity based on your ability to hold a conversation

### Exercise Intensities

Light



Can talk and sing

Moderate



Can talk but can't sing

Vigorous



Have difficulty talking

## Physical Activity Intensity

	Light	Moderate	Vigorous
<b>METs*</b>	1.5 – 3	3 – 6	> 6
<b>% Heart Rate max</b>	50 – 63	64 – 76	77 – 93
<b>Talk test</b>	You can talk and sing without issue	You can talk but not sing during the activity	You will not be able to say more than a few words without pausing for a breath
<b>Warmth</b>	-	Warmer	Hot and sweating
<b>RPE* (0 - 10 scale)</b>	1 - 2	3 - 4	5 - 6

\* METs express exercise intensity relative to the rate of resting energy expenditure. 1 MET is equivalent to an oxygen uptake of 3.5 ml/kg/min. RPE is the Rate of Perceived Exertion measured on the modified Borg 0 – 10 scale.

# Active Pregnancy Foundation

Supporting women to stay active throughout pregnancy and beyond,  
by providing expertise & advice, changing culture & challenging policy



## What's New

Want to know what our plans are for the next year?

We've got lots going on and loads we want to achieve.

Our Big Push outlines our vision and key activities for the year, so give it a read to discover what we'll committing to in 2024.



Regular Spin  
**ACTIVITIES COVERED IN THIS SERIES**



Rectangular Snip

FAQs

## Exercise During Pregnancy

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### Frequently Asked Questions

Expand All

Is it safe to exercise during pregnancy?



Are there certain conditions that make exercise during pregnancy unsafe?



What are the benefits of exercise during pregnancy?



How much should I exercise during pregnancy?



What changes occur in the body during pregnancy that can affect my exercise routine?



# Concerns?

## GET ACTIVE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PREGNANCY



UK VERSION

NAME (+ NAME OF PARENT/GUARDIAN IF APPLICABLE) (PLEASE PRINT):

TODAY'S DATE (DD/MM/YYYY):

YOUR DUE DATE (DD/MM/YYYY):

NO. OF WEEKS PREGNANT:

AGE:

Physical activity during pregnancy has many health benefits and is generally not risky for you and your baby. But for some conditions, physical activity is not recommended. This questionnaire is to help decide whether you should speak to a healthcare professional (e.g. GP or midwife) before you begin or continue to be physically active.

Please answer YES or NO to each question to the best of your ability. **If your health changes as your pregnancy progresses you should fill in this questionnaire again.**

1.	In this pregnancy, do you have:		
	a. Mild, moderate or severe respiratory or cardiovascular diseases (e.g., chronic bronchitis)?	Y	N
	b. Epilepsy that is not stable?	Y	N
	c. Type 1 diabetes that is not stable or your blood sugar is outside of target ranges?	Y	N
	d. Thyroid disease that is not stable or your thyroid function is outside of target ranges?	Y	N
	e. An eating disorder(s) or malnutrition?	Y	N
	f. Twins (28 weeks pregnant or later)? Or are you expecting triplets or higher multiple births?	Y	N
	g. Low red blood cell number (anemia) with high levels of fatigue and/or light-headedness?	Y	N
	h. High blood pressure (preeclampsia, gestational hypertension, or chronic hypertension that is not stable)?	Y	N
	i. A baby that is growing slowly (intrauterine growth restriction)?	Y	N
	j. Unexplained bleeding, ruptured membranes or labour before 37 weeks?	Y	N
	k. A placenta that is partially or completely covering the cervix (placenta previa)?	Y	N
	l. Weak cervical tissue (incompetent cervix)?	Y	N
	m. A stitch or tape to reinforce your cervix (cerclage)?	Y	N
2.	In previous pregnancies, have you had:		
	a. Recurrent miscarriages (loss of your baby before 20 weeks gestation two or more times)?	Y	N
	b. Early delivery (before 37 weeks gestation)?	Y	N
3.	Do you have any other medical condition that may affect your ability to be physically active during pregnancy? What is the condition? Specify:	Y	N
4.	Is there any other reason you are concerned about physical activity during pregnancy?		

Go to Page 2 Describe Your Physical Activity Level



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Page 1

## Describe Your Physical Activity Level



During a typical week, what types of physical activities do you take part in (e.g., swimming, walking, resistance training, yoga)?

During the same week, please describe ON AVERAGE how often and for how long you engage in physical activity of a light, moderate or vigorous intensity. See definitions for intensity below the box.

ON AVERAGE	FREQUENCY (times per week)	INTENSITY (see below for definitions)	DURATION (minutes per session)
How physically active were you in the <b>six months before pregnancy?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 <input type="checkbox"/> 3-4 <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 <input type="checkbox"/> 5-7	<input type="checkbox"/> light <input type="checkbox"/> moderate <input type="checkbox"/> vigorous	<input type="checkbox"/> <20 <input type="checkbox"/> 31-60 <input type="checkbox"/> 20-30 <input type="checkbox"/> >60
How physically active have you been <b>during this pregnancy?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 <input type="checkbox"/> 3-4 <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 <input type="checkbox"/> 5-7	<input type="checkbox"/> light <input type="checkbox"/> moderate <input type="checkbox"/> vigorous	<input type="checkbox"/> <20 <input type="checkbox"/> 31-60 <input type="checkbox"/> 20-30 <input type="checkbox"/> >60
What are your physical activity goals for the <b>rest of your pregnancy?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 <input type="checkbox"/> 3-4 <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 <input type="checkbox"/> 5-7	<input type="checkbox"/> light <input type="checkbox"/> moderate <input type="checkbox"/> vigorous	<input type="checkbox"/> <20 <input type="checkbox"/> 31-60 <input type="checkbox"/> 20-30 <input type="checkbox"/> >60

**Light intensity physical activity:** You are moving, but you do not sweat or breathe hard, such as walking to get the mail or light gardening.

**Moderate intensity physical activity:** Your heart rate goes up and you may sweat or breathe hard. You can talk, but could not sing. Examples include brisk walking.

**Vigorous intensity physical activity:** Your heart rate goes up substantially, you feel hot and sweaty, and you cannot say more than a few words without pausing to breathe. Examples include fast stationary cycling and running.

## General Advice for Being Physically Active During Pregnancy

Follow the guidance from the United Kingdom's Chief Medical Officers (2019) on the amount and type of physical activity pregnant women should be doing to improve their health: [www.gov.uk/government/collections/physical-activity-guidelines](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/physical-activity-guidelines)

It is recommended that pregnant women accumulate 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity throughout the week and perform strengthening activities twice per week. **If you are planning to take part in vigorous-intensity physical activity, or be physically active at elevations above 2500 m (8200 feet), then consult with a healthcare professional beforehand.** If at any time you have questions or concerns about being active during your pregnancy, seek advice from a healthcare professional.

## Declaration

To the best of my knowledge, all of the information I have supplied on this questionnaire is correct. **If my health changes, I will complete this questionnaire again.**

I answered **NO** to all questions on Page 1. Sign and date the declaration below. Physical activity is recommended.

I answered **YES** to one or more questions on Page 1 and I will speak with a healthcare professional before beginning or continuing physical activity. Healthcare Professional Consultation Form for Prenatal Physical Activity: UK Version can be used to start the conversation ([www.csep.ca/getactivequestionnaire-pregnancy](http://www.csep.ca/getactivequestionnaire-pregnancy)).

I have spoken with my healthcare professional who has recommended that I take part in physical activity during my pregnancy. Sign and date the declaration below.

NAME (+ NAME OF PARENT/GUARDIAN IF APPLICABLE) (PLEASE PRINT):

SIGNATURE (OR SIGNATURE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN IF APPLICABLE):

TODAY'S DATE (DD/MM/YYYY):

TELEPHONE (OPTIONAL):

EMAIL (OPTIONAL):




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Page 2



— TIP —

Doing any physical activity is better than none, and all physical activity (e.g. for fun, for transport, or at work) counts!



# Compression Wear??

**SRCHEALTH™**  
*Support for Life*



Loved by 200,000+  
Mothers Worldwide



Designed in Consultation  
With an Obstetrician



24-hr Wearability Prevents Muscle  
deactivation through gentle  
compression, providing pain relief  
during exercise

**Now Delivering to EU from Ireland**



# Sleeping in Pregnancy

- It is advised to sleep on your side from 28 weeks of pregnancy
- This can be either left or right
- If you wake up on your back don't worry roll over onto your side.





One or two pillows to support your head and neck

One or two pillows supporting top leg so that your hip, knee and ankle are in line and your pubic joint is well supported

A pillow under your bump to support the weight of your baby and prevent rotation of the spine



# Common physical issues in pregnancy

- Pelvic Pain
- Lower Back Pain
- Coccyx Pain
- Carpal tunnel syndrome
- Rib pain

# Pelvic Girdle Pain



# Pelvic Girdle Pain

- Prevalence: 39-80%
- Difficulty changing positions
- Limited endurance for any sustained position/walking.
- Worse as day goes on
- Can change in nature/location



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Managing Pelvic Girdle Pain in Pregnancy

**What is Pelvic Girdle Pain?**

Pregnancy related Pelvic girdle pain (PGP) is pain which is felt around the, lower back, pelvic joints hips and thighs.

It is common and can affect greater than 50% women during pregnancy.

What do we know about our pelvis in pregnancy?

It is Stable, Safe and pain can be Self-managed.

**Pelvic Girdle Pain**

PDF

Download ↓

# Pelvic and Low Back Class

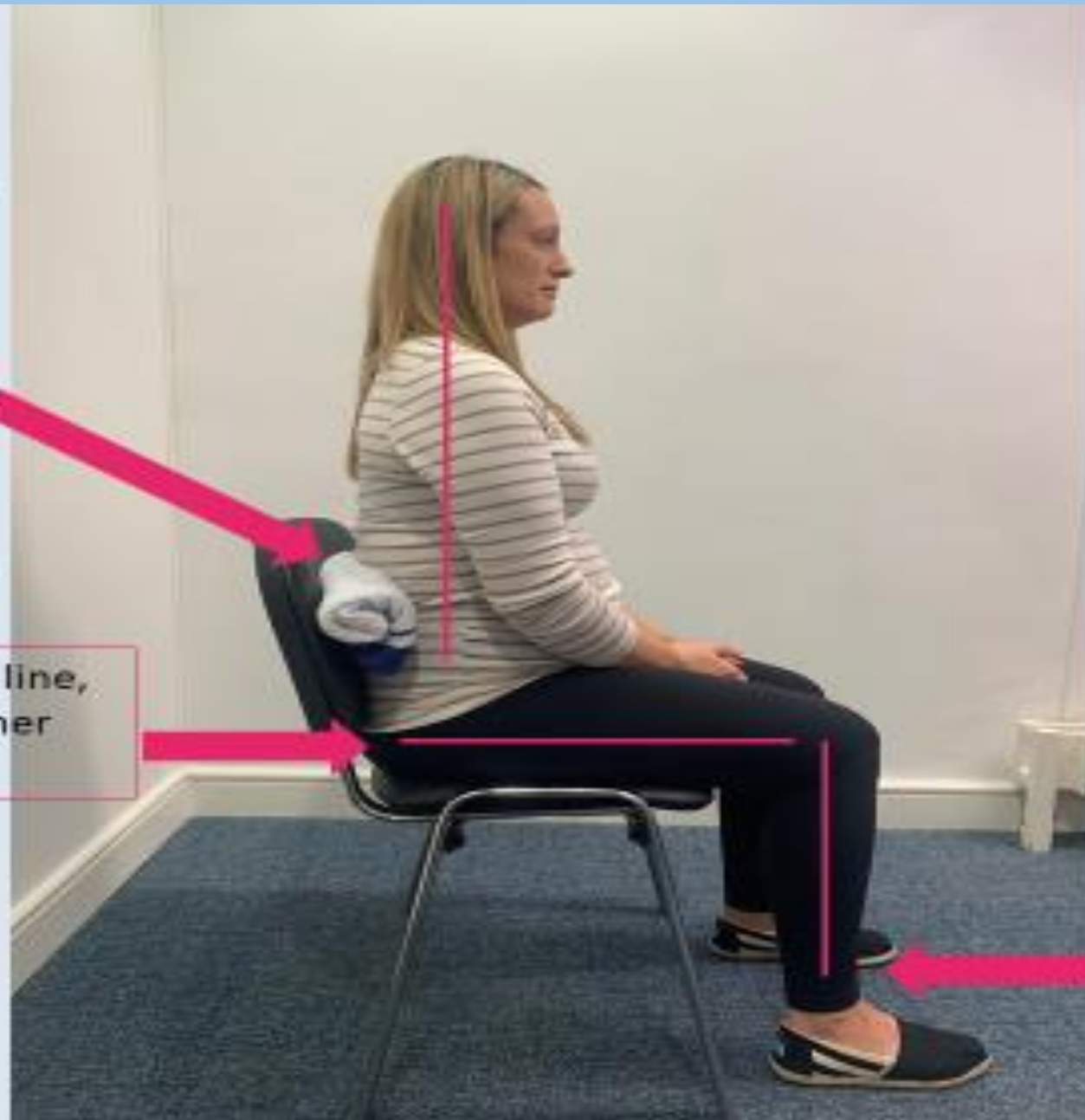


Women's Health Physiotherapy  
National Maternity Hospital

Back and neck tall and well supported. You can use a folded towel or a pillow for extra lumbar spine support

Knees and Hips in line, or hips a little higher than your knees

Feet flat on the floor and resting under the knees



## Correct Sitting Position in Pregnancy



### ❌ Wrong Position

Avoid: Slouching,  
Crossed Legs, Rounded  
Shoulders.



### ✅ Correct Position



Keep your back  
straight and  
supported.



Sit with feet flat  
on the floor.



Avoid crossing  
your legs.



Use a cushion  
for lower back  
support.



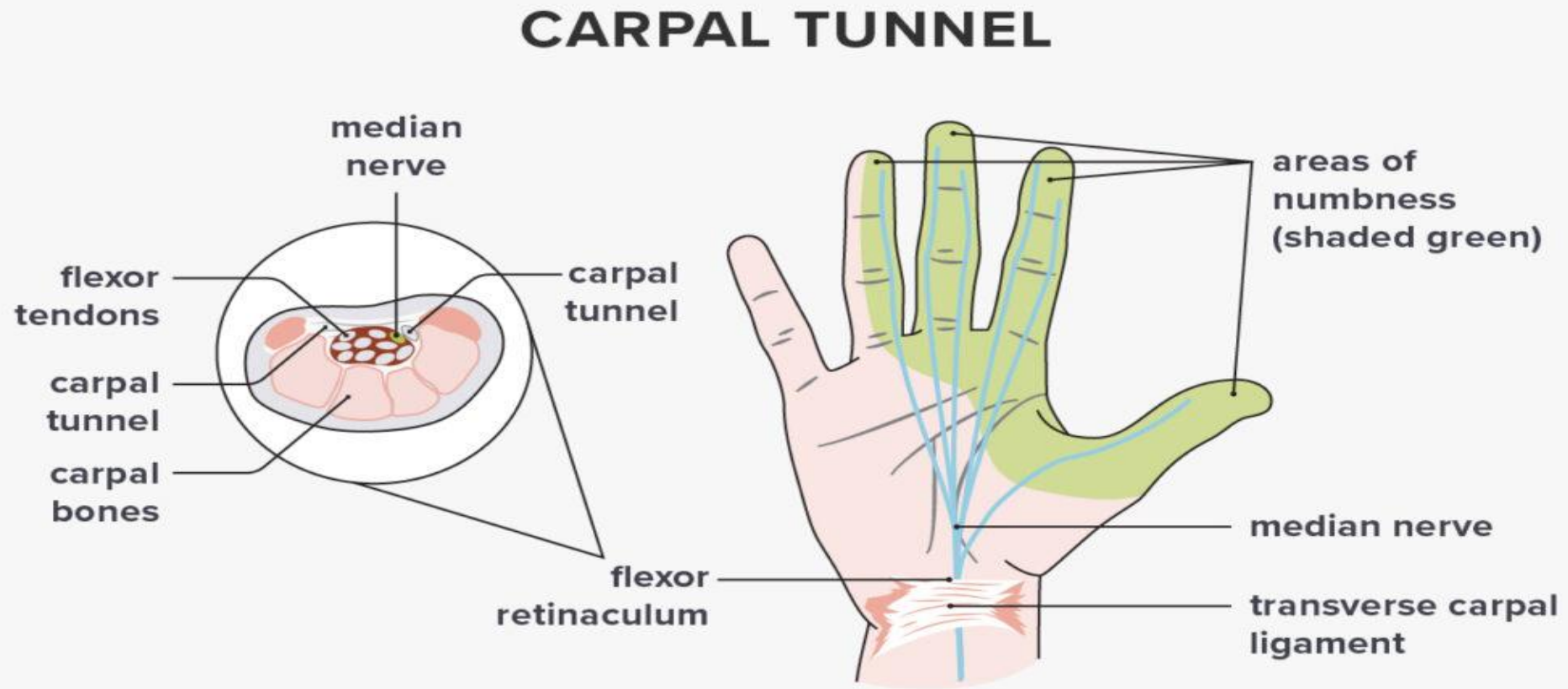
Keep knees and  
hips at 90°.

# Posture






# Carpal tunnel Syndrome



# Carpal tunnel syndrome

- An ache or pain in your fingers, hand or arm
- Numb hands
- Tingling or pins and needles
- Weak thumb or difficulty gripping
- Worse as day goes on

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Advice & Exercise for Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

**What is the carpal tunnel?**

The carpal tunnel is the space at the base of the wrist, where nerves and tendons pass through from the forearm to the hand.

It is a narrow passageway, formed by bones and a tough fibrous ligament.

The median nerve is one of the main nerves to pass through this space. It provides feeling to the thumb, index and middle finger, along with half of the ring finger, and gives power to small muscles near the thumb.



**Carpel Tunnel Syndrome**

PDF

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# Rib pain



# Rib pain

- Usually arises at end of 2<sup>nd</sup> trimester into 3<sup>rd</sup>.

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Managing upper back and rib pain in pregnancy



Upper back and rib pain during pregnancy is a common symptom, especially in the third trimester.

It can be caused by several factors, including the growing baby putting pressure on the ribs, hormonal changes, and the baby's movements.

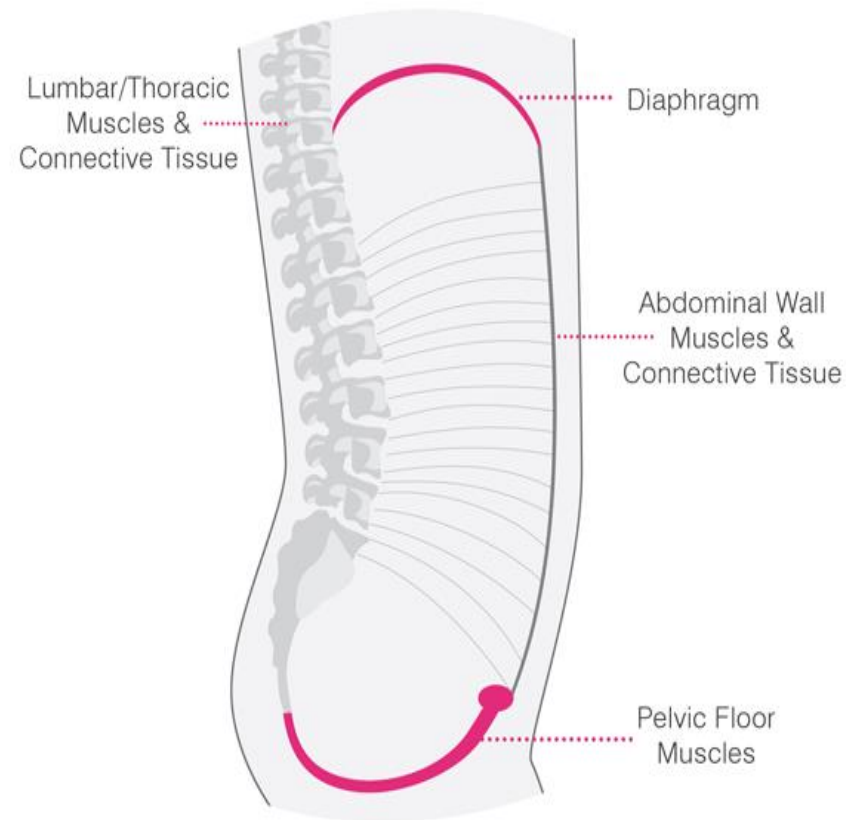
The sensation can range from mild discomfort to strong pain.

The pressure from the top of your growing uterus is often the cause.

## Upper Back and Rib Pain

PDF

Download 



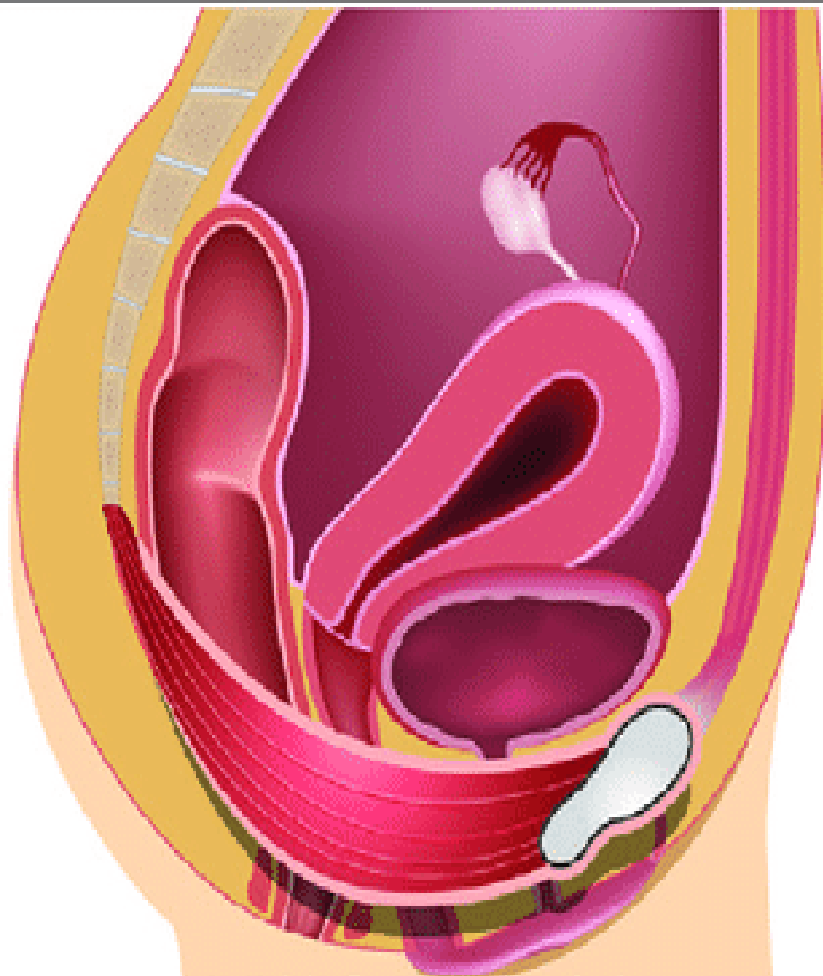
**Core Activation: The 'Expansion and Compression' cycle of the Core driven by the breath**

[www.burrelleducation.com](http://www.burrelleducation.com)

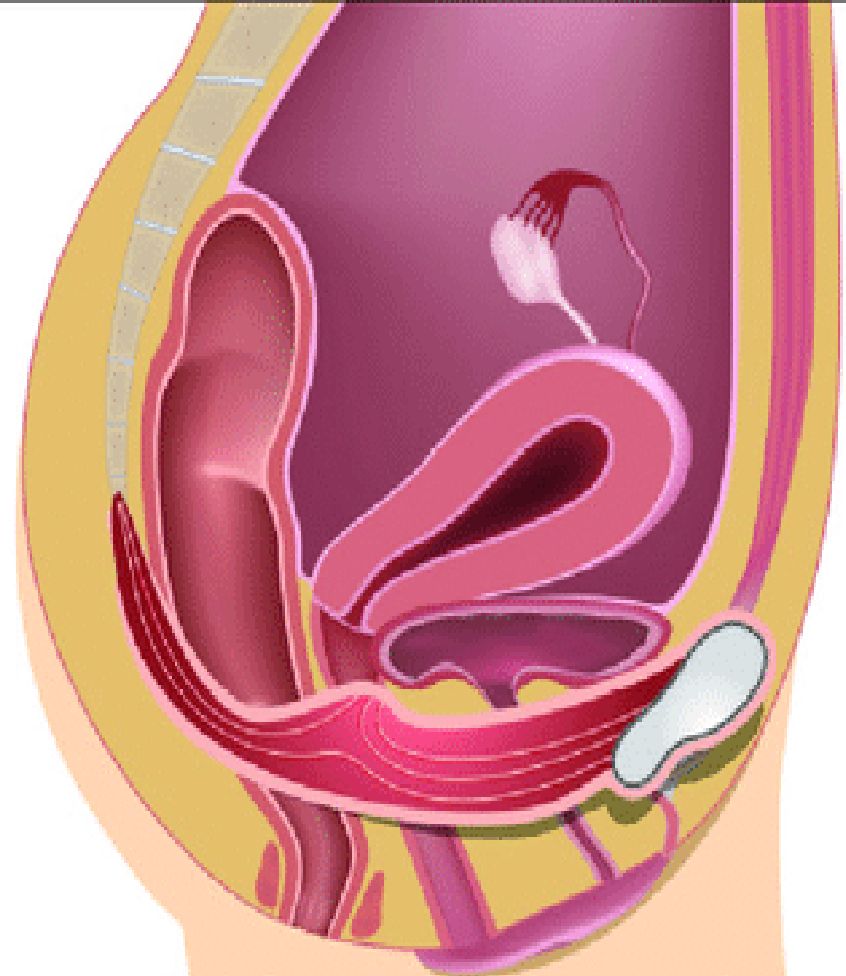
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Diagram showing where pelvic floor muscles are located

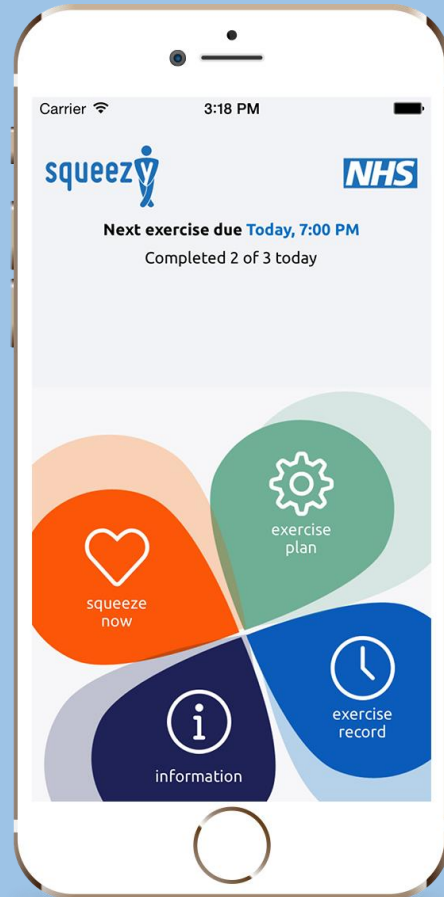




A. Pelvic floor muscles during rest



B. Pelvic floor muscles during contractions



- Aim to contract x 10 seconds & repeat 10 times
- Feel the release!
- Aim to perform 10 quick contractions
- Breathe out as contract.
- Use the “knack”
  
- Repeat 3 times a day

# Having a wee

- Kidneys produce more wee
- Pressure on bladder
- Take your time.
- Move back and forth
- Drink adequate water

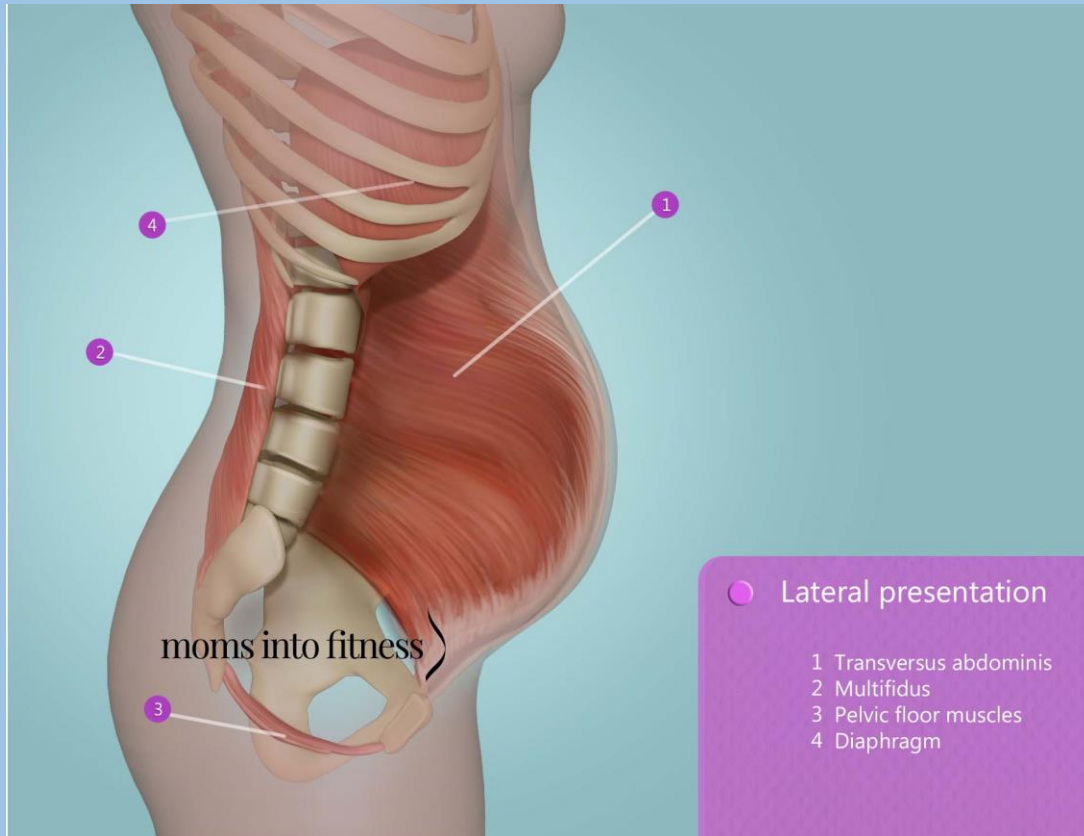


# Preventing Constipation

- Fluid
- Fibre
- Poo posture
- Movement



# Transversus abdominis

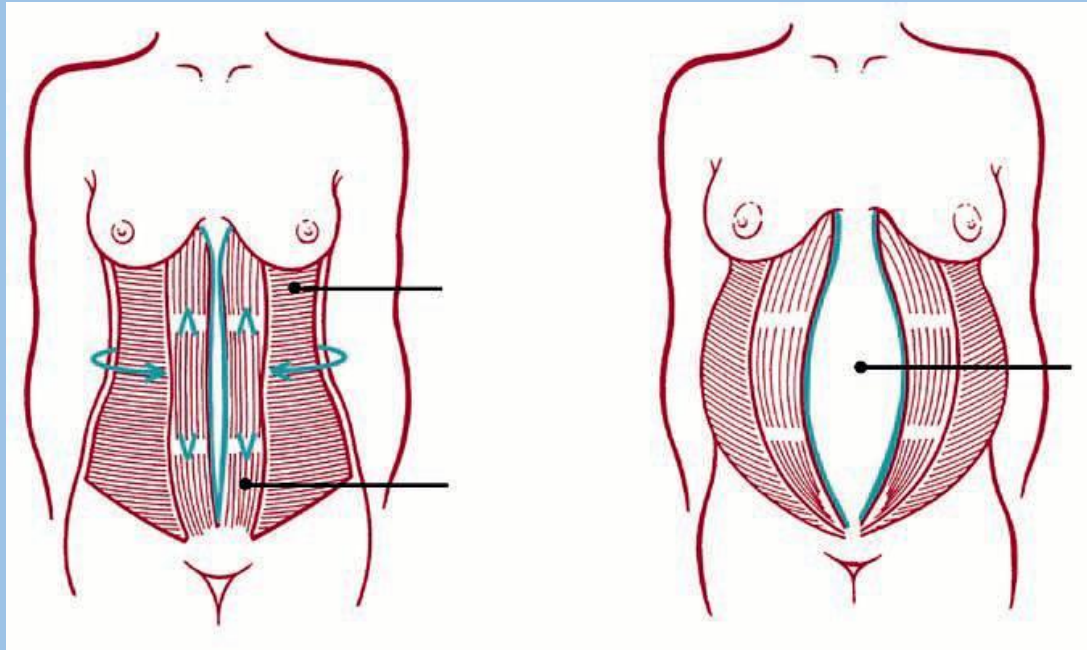


# Transversus abdominis



- Aim for 10 x 10 second contractions
- Breathe out as you engage
- Repeat 3 times a day
- Use it to support.

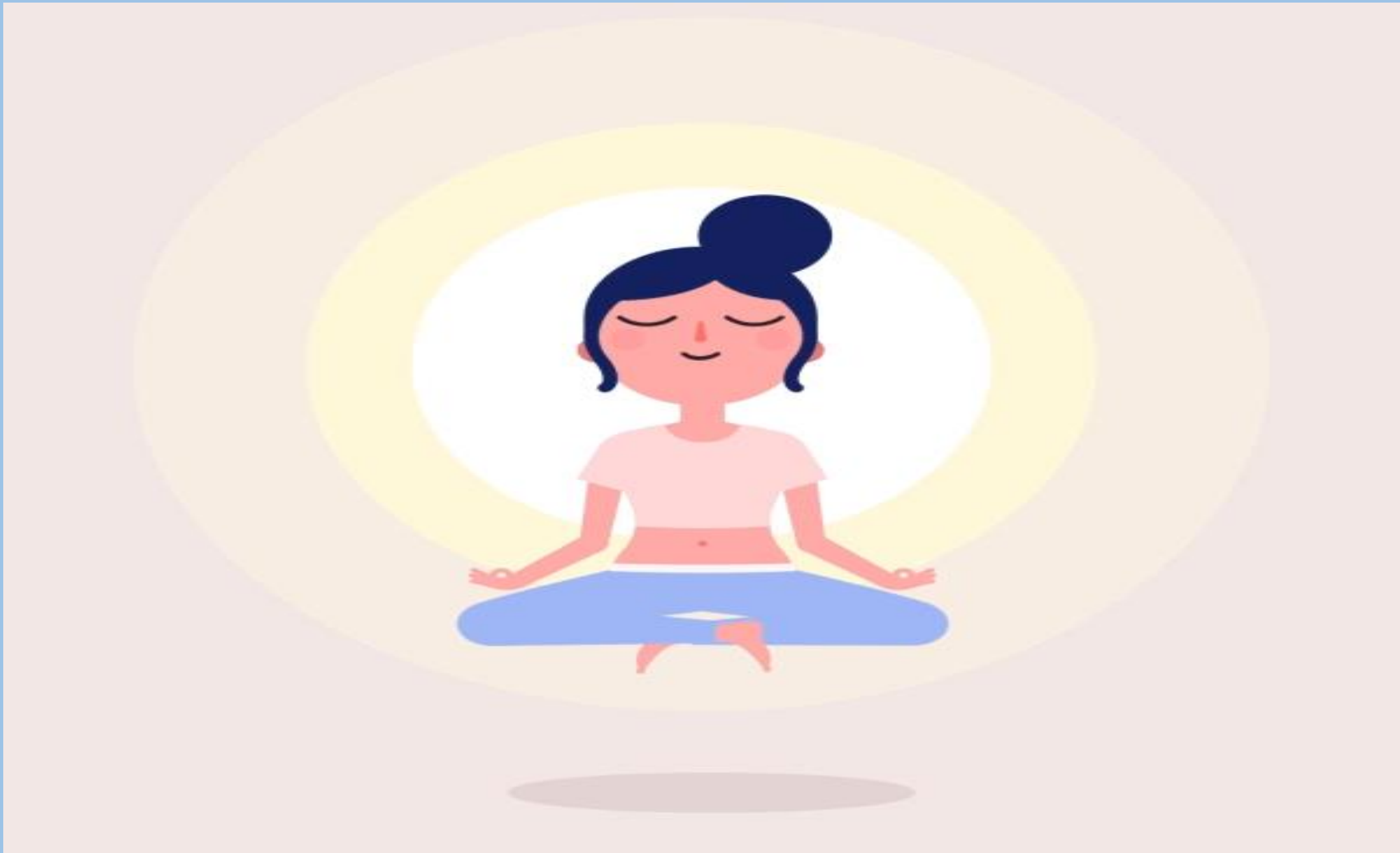
# Diastasis of the Recti Muscles



# Working with our breath in Pregnancy

- Calms our CNS
- Preparation for Birth
- Mobilises our body
- Improves our circulation





# Postnatal Recovery Advice

- Advisable to attend before birth
- Class every Friday
- 11-12.30
- Email [njordan@nmh.ie](mailto:njordan@nmh.ie) to book

The National Maternity Hospital

## HEALTHY BODIES AFTER BIRTH

An information session on caring and reconnecting with your body as it recovers after birth

Topics include:

- Bladder & Bowel Care
- Abdominal Care
- Pelvic Floor Advice
- Returning to Movement
- and more!

Every Friday at 11am

Online

Physiotherapist led information session  
Email [njordan@nmh.ie](mailto:njordan@nmh.ie) to book your place  
[www.nmh.ie](http://www.nmh.ie)

Now over to you!

Any questions?



The National Maternity Hospital  
Vita Gloriosa Vita ~ Life Glorious Life

# Nutrition in Pregnancy – what to focus on?



Sinéad Curran,  
Dietitian  
Email: [dietitian@nmh.ie](mailto:dietitian@nmh.ie)  
Tel: 01-6373314

How do you know what nutrition information is useful to you, and what might be causing you unnecessary worry?

In this webinar, we will cover key topics to help optimise nutrition for your wellbeing in pregnancy and your baby's growth & development.

- 🍎 Nutrition for pregnancy and beyond
- 🍎 Nutrients of importance for each trimester- e.g. folic acid, iodine, iron, calcium
- 🍎 Supplements- what do you need?
- 🍎 Weight gain
- 🍎 Food safety
- 🍎 Preventing problems e.g. nausea, constipation, anaemia
- 🍎 Useful resources

**we look forward to answering your pregnancy nutrition questions**

Email: physio@nmh.ie

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JSSBDMK>