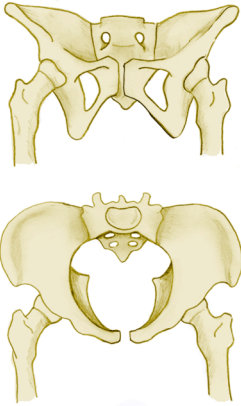




## Symphysis Pubis Dysfunction (SPD)



Your pelvis is made up of three bones which form a 'circle' shape and almost meet at the front. The small gap between the two bones at the front of the pelvis is connected by cartilage and reinforced by several ligaments. This is called the pubic symphysis.

During pregnancy the hormones relaxin and progesterone act upon the joints and ligaments of the pelvis to increase it's flexibility in preparation for birth.

However, in some women, either due to excessive levels of hormones, hypersensitivity to hormones or malalignment of the pelvis, the pubic symphysis becomes extra lax or there is extra strain on the joint.

In a lot of cases the cause may be part hormonal, part structural.

This condition is known as symphysis pubis dysfunction (SPD), or pelvic girdle pain (PGP). In very severe cases the pubic symphysis can separate further, which is known as diastasis pubis (DSP).

### Symptoms

Symptoms vary a lot!

Almost all women have substantial pubic pain, and the area is tender to touch. Any activity which involves lifting one leg at a time or parting the legs tends to be painful. In most cases symptoms are worst at night, and turning over in bed is especially excruciating.

### Managing SPD

Chiropractic treatment for SPD includes correcting malalignments of the pelvis using positioning techniques and gentle joint manipulation to correct the alignment of the pelvis. This reduces

sheer force on the pubic symphysis. Round ligaments are also sometimes massaged to ease pulling pain in the groin and reduce strain on the pubic bones.

It is important that SPD is diagnosed early and that activities and postures are modified as much as possible in order to prevent the condition from worsening.

The following should be practiced to minimise strain on the pubic symphysis:

- ✓ In bed, use a small pillow between your knees while sleeping.
- ✓ Use another pillow under your bump when side lying.
- ✓ Keep your hips and legs parallel as possible when turning over in bed. Ask your partner to hold your knees together if necessary.
- ✓ When sitting hold your knees close together and slow down your walking pace (you may not have a choice in this).
- ✓ Avoid straddle movements.
- ✓ Swing your legs together as a unit when getting in and out of the car.
- ✓ Move slowly and avoid sudden twists or 'lunges'.
- ✓ Accompanying back pain may be relieved by sitting on a gym ball, remember to keep legs together still.
- ✓ Some women get relief from maternity support belts, however if the pelvis is malaligned these can be uncomfortable and actually increase pain.

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