

## Physiotherapy Outpatient Department

# Patient Information

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# Information

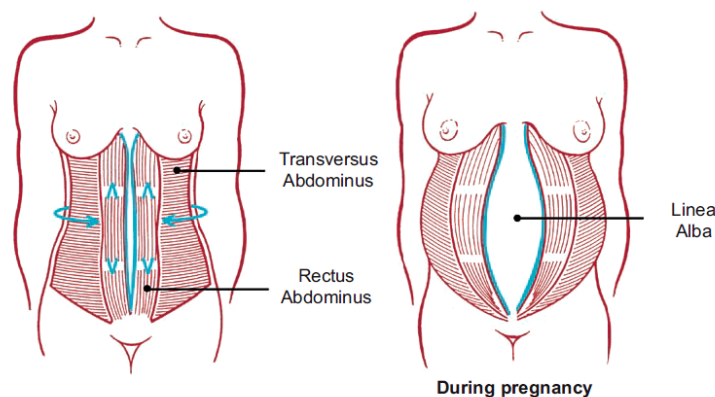
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Authors: C Leadley & J Lofts  
Roles: Physiotherapists  
Publication Date: 07/13  
Review Date: 07/16

## Special care of your stomach muscles during pregnancy

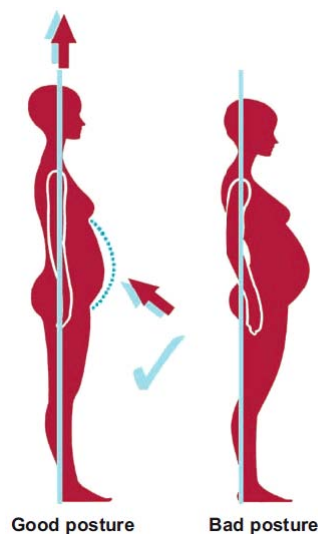
Your abdominal (tummy) muscles support your back during pregnancy. Sometimes during pregnancy these muscles 'gape' open to allow room for the baby as it grows. It is important to look after your abdominal muscles and back to prevent unnecessary strain.



This sheet reminds you how to look after yourself during pregnancy.

### Posture

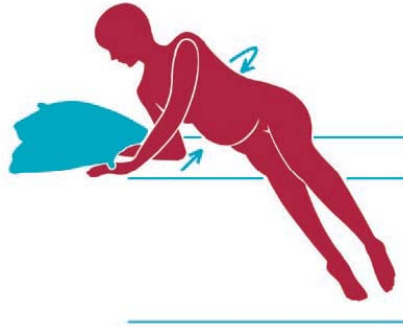
It is important to stand and walk 'tall' with the top of your head stretching up towards the ceiling. Notice how your pelvis then tilts so that your bottom goes 'down and under' and your tummy goes 'up and in'.



## Care with moving

### Getting out of bed

Never 'heave' straight up from lying to sitting as it overstretches your tummy and back. Instead bend your knees, roll onto your side and push up with your elbow and hand. Reverse the process to get into bed.



### Getting out of the bath

Put a non slip mat in the bath. Once the water has drained away, roll onto your side and push up onto your knees. Use a handrail if available.

### Coughing, laughing or sneezing

Coughing, laughing or sneezing increases the pressure within the abdomen. Supporting the tummy by cuddling it with your hands will prevent it from 'bulging' and the gap getting worse.

### Rest

It is important to take the strain off of your abdominal muscles at intervals during the day (for example by sitting down when having a drink). Have an extra rest lying on your bed sometime during the day.

### Lifting

**Avoid heavy lifting.** Where you have to lift, do so correctly: Remember to bend your knees and keep your back straight, hold the object close to your body, and move your feet rather than twisting your back.



## **Exercise**

It is important to gently exercise your low abdominal muscles to aid quicker recovery after having your baby.

- Sit reclined and supported by pillows on a bed or settee and take a relaxed breath in
- As you breathe out, gently tighten your low abdominal muscles. The exercise should be pain free
- Repeat a few times, twice a day

**Don't forget to do your pelvic floor exercises!**

## **Further Information**

Physiotherapy Outpatient Department telephone number: 01305 255314