



Safe full-body relief:

Wellspring Birthwork Massage



Importance of Massage

As you prepare to birth your baby, your body will undergo many hormonal and physical changes :

- ❖ The hormone relaxin loosens your joints, decreasing stability & increasing imbalance
- ❖ Growing breast tissue and modified posture contribute to strain in the upper spine and loss of cervical curve, leading to headache and upper back strain
- ❖ Growing baby expands the ribcage, placing strain on mid-back and rib joints
- ❖ Growing belly pulls down the lower back and shifts the center of gravity forwards, straining the lumbar spine
- ❖ Pelvic misalignment may alter the pelvic opening, leading to intrauterine constraint & baby-pelvis disproportion
- ❖ Widening gait may aggravate pelvic and hip joints and muscles, straining the sciatic nerve and uterine support ligaments
- ❖ Increased blood volume & pressure cause swelling & discomfort in arms & legs



Pregnancy & Birth Benefits

- ~ **Less** back & leg pain
- ~ **Reduced** need for pain medication ~
- ~ **Less** swelling & better oxygenation ~
- ~ **Lower** cortisol reaching baby ~
- ~ **Reduced** birth complications ~
- ~ **Fewer** premature births ~
- ~ **Better** quality sleep ~
- ~ **Shorter** labor times ~

Postpartum Benefits

For you :

- ❖ Preventing and correcting posture imbalances from carrying, wearing, and nursing your baby
- ❖ Stress relief & grounding into your body as a whole person, beyond parenthood
- ❖ Support in your healing and recovery after the birth process
- ❖ Improved mental health

For baby :

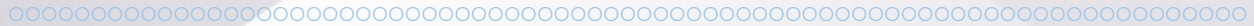
- ❖ Lower cortisol in newborns
- ❖ Better healthy birth weights
- ❖ Expertise in nurturing touch

Birth-work massage can help you better manage these issues, and live more comfortably through childbearing.



Safe full-body relief:

Wellspring Birth Pregnancy Massage



Risks & Safety

Pregnancy massage is one of the safest, most common practices in birth work. Research has found no documented morbidity or mortality whatsoever directly related to massage. That being said :

- ❖ Your body, your baby, and your birth are yours, and all decision-making power should be yours as well. Wellspring Birth asks that you consult your own body-knowledge and intuition, conduct any research you would like, and consult any healthcare professionals you may choose prior to beginning massage.
- ❖ Wellspring Birth may decline to give you pregnancy massage for any reason, including if you have fractures, osteoporosis or other bone disease, hygiene issues, open or healing wounds, hemophilia or take blood thinners, or low platelets. Any unexplained pain should be discussed with your healthcare practitioner prior to beginning massage.
- ❖ Communication & consent are essential. Wellspring Birth will check in with you consistently, using techniques to accommodate your pregnant or postpartum body including positioning, modified pressure, and avoiding percussive motions. It is your responsibility to openly and freely communicate your wishes, comfort level, and any concerns.

Further Reading & Sources

Field, T et al. "Pregnant women benefit from massage therapy." *Journal of Psychosomatic Obstetrics and Gynaecology* vol. 20,1 (1999): 31-8.

Field, T, MA Diego, M Hernandez-Reif, S Schanberg & C Kuhn. "Massage therapy effects on depressed pregnant women." *Journal of Psychosomatic Obstetrics & Gynecology* vol. 25,2 (2004): 115-122.

Dekker, Rebecca. "Massage for Pain Relief during Labor." *Evidence Based Birth®*, EBB, 14 Dec. 2018, evidencebasedbirth.com/massage-for-pain-relief-during-labor/.

Kinsella, Michael T, and Catherine Monk. "Impact of maternal stress, depression and anxiety on fetal neurobehavioral development." *Clinical obstetrics and gynecology* vol. 52,3 (2009): 425-40.

Institute of Somatic Therapy Inc. Certified Prenatal Massage Therapist two-part course, 2023.

