



PREGNANCY MASSAGE

Massage can enhance parent-baby communication even at this early stage of development and can also help the father feel more involved in the pregnancy. There are many different strokes you can do to help mum through pregnancy. This section will focus on the tummy, introducing opportunities to make mum feel more comfortable.

Studies have shown that mums who have skin contact during pregnancy tend to have easier labours and connect better with their baby. Also, fathers who give mum a loving massage whilst pregnant, talk to the baby and attend classes with the mum, tend to have a better connection with mum and baby*.

When massaging, apply a light touch to begin with and gently increase pressure with mum's guidance.

The strokes in this guide were reproduced with kind permission from Dr. Gowri Motha, author of *Gentle Birth Method* and are based on Joseph B Stephenson's *Creative Healing Method*. For more information please see www.gentlebirthmethod.com.

Benefits of massaging the abdomen

- Mums may have an easier labour
- Enhances parent-baby bonding from the very beginning
- Tones muscles
- Reduces swelling in the legs
- Helps with digestive function

Mum should lie on her back on a bed or couch at a 45 degree angle. Use pillows to help make the position comfortable.

Toning

Sit or stand on the right side of mum. Start with a cupped right hand and open palm with the thumb out at right angles. Place this hand on the left side of the abdomen at the bikini line and sweep upwards in a straight line toward the ribs, following the bump.

Break contact and start again, moving towards the midline of the body. Repeat from right to left and so on for 10 minutes.

This stroke will soothe and help mums-to-be feel more comfortable.



*Adapted from *Gentle Birth Method*, 2004. Dr. Gowri Motha & Karen Swan MacLeod

Pelvic drainage

This helps to remove the excess fluid which can raise the baby's head in the lower abdomen resulting in a longer labour.

As before, the mother lies on her back at a comfortable 45 degree angle. Hands should be warmed before applying these to mum's abdomen.

Again, start with a cupped right hand, drawing the hand along the bikini line, underneath and around the tummy to the hip bone. This should be done with a very light touch and repeated about 10-15 times. Now switch hands and switch sides to the left to do the same. In total this stroke should take about 10 minutes.



JOHNSON'S® Baby would like to thank the ROYAL COLLEGE OF MIDWIVES, and Dr. Gowri Motha for assistance in reviewing this guide.