

Navigating Pain Relief in Pregnancy with Fibromyalgia

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Pain relief is a big issue for those who live with chronic pain. It becomes an even bigger issue during pregnancy. For those of us whose symptoms worsen during pregnancy, it's a minefield.

My fifth tip for [pregnancy with Fibromyalgia](#) is to get a pain management plan in place – preferably prior to becoming pregnant.

There are some medicines that are categorically unsafe for pregnancy. There are a lot of medicines that they just don't know enough about, performing experiments on pregnant women, particularly involving something that may harm a baby, would be unethical. So literature relies on data provided by pregnant women. This website [Mother to Baby](#) provides fact sheets, access to professionals about medicine in pregnancy and more.

The first thing to do when considering pregnancy with a chronic pain-based illness would be to discuss plans for pregnancy with your doctor. With my first pregnancy, we didn't talk to the doctor before conceiving, and then when we were discussing the only medicine I was on (amitriptyline) I nearly had a panic attack at the thought of going off it. My doctor called a specialist and they agreed that the benefits outweighed the potential risks – for me and my unique situation.

Sleep is a big battle for me, I enact a long list of sleep hygiene tactics every day; take a low dose of amitriptyline at 8pm, take a low dose of naltrexone (I only started this after I had my second baby, prior to this I would take pain medicine at this time) at 9pm, get into bed with my heat pack, do a body scan meditation, and if I'm lucky, fall asleep for a few hours at a time. A good night sees me fall asleep relatively quickly and only lose an hour to awake or restless times. It would appear that the second the pregnancy hormones enter my body, sleep runs away screaming. Pain also becomes a much bigger issue when I have to lie on my side (as you must once baby gets big enough to put pressure on an important vein when lying on your back).

You do not have to be miserable, there's also research that suggests that under treated pain can negatively affect the pregnancy. [1] So if your doctor refuses to help you with pain relief, get a second opinion. Do some research for yourself and present it to them. I provide what I did during pregnancy to be as well as possible in my book [Pregnancy and Fibromyalgia](#).

Here are a few [natural pain relief mechanisms](#) that I enacted during my pregnancies:

- Heat pack
- Warm shower or bath
- Essential oils such as lavender and peppermint (for external use only and with a carrier oil after the first trimester)
- Magnesium oil (I never got a calf cramp in my second pregnancy using this)
- Gentle walks and stretching
- [Meditation](#) – especially ones specifically for pain relief on pregnancy, there's heaps on YouTube to search up
- Massage – either for yourself, or from a partner, friend, or therapist
- Rest and sleep as much as you can
- Belly support belt – I had symphysis pubis disorder (my pelvis basically widened too far) and this really helped.

I always recommend remembering that pregnancy is finite, there is an end date and a beautiful baby as the pay off. I also was a bit smug in my second pregnancy because I knew that I am one of those very rare women who actually sleep better with a new born baby than pregnant, the pain levels are just so high that sleep is almost non-existent in the final trimester. Last year, once I delivered my second baby, my bed that had previously felt as hard as a rock seemed luxuriously soft. So in those one, two or three hours that the baby was asleep – I slept like the dead, which is a very rare occurrence for me.

I really hope that this post helps you on your way to relieving some of the pain involved in pregnancy with a chronic illness.

[1] Malaika Babb, PharmD, Gideon Koren, MD FRCPC FACMT, and Adrienne Einarson, RN. Treating pain during pregnancy. *Can Fam Physician*. 2010 Jan; 56(1): 25, 27.
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2809170/>

For more information about pregnancy and Fibromyalgia:

Find my [pregnancy diaries](#) from my second pregnancy and all of my pregnancy resources gathered here.

My book *Pregnancy and Fibromyalgia* is available on [Amazon now](#)

Sign up to receive my [free micro-course](#): *Pregnancy and Fibromyalgia: Arm Yourself with Knowledge* in my free resource page.

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