



## Reflexology in Pregnancy

In reflexology, the feet (or hands) represent a map of the whole body, with every part of the body reflected on one or both feet. Research shows that regular pregnancy reflexology may make labour easier & more efficient. It's very relaxing and may treat various pregnancy symptoms eg sickness, constipation, backache & symphysis pubis pain. However, it's not just a "foot massage" – it's a very powerful therapy which may also cause complications in unskilled hands. Responses to reflexology in pregnancy vary: you may feel hot, sick or dizzy during treatment & often you feel tired & slightly uncomfortable for a few hours after reflexology. This is normal but if you are worried consult your therapist, stop the treatment & inform your midwife. The reflexologist should also liaise with your midwife about any treatment during pregnancy.

Although there's no evidence that reflexology causes miscarriage it's wise to avoid treatment in the first 3 months unless your therapist is also a midwife who can assess whether it's safe for you. Reflexologists who aren't midwives may, in any case, decline to treat you until later in your pregnancy. If you develop pregnancy complications eg bleeding, premature labour or high blood pressure, check with your midwife before having treatment, & if you're diabetic or epileptic, you should only be treated during pregnancy by a midwife-reflexologist. If you have a verruca, varicose veins or other foot / leg condition, hand reflexology may be possible but you shouldn't have any treatment at all if you have a high temperature or severe infection. Inform your therapist if you've had kidney stones, gallstones, mental illness or other medical condition; reflexology in pregnancy should be avoided completely if you have major medical problems eg heart disease, clotting disorders or conditions involving severe inflammation.

Please note that reflexology should *not* be used to encourage labour to start unless the therapist is also a midwife, or has obtained permission from your consultant that it is safe & appropriate to do so.

**Always inform your midwife if you are receiving reflexology during pregnancy or wish to be accompanied during labour by your therapist.**