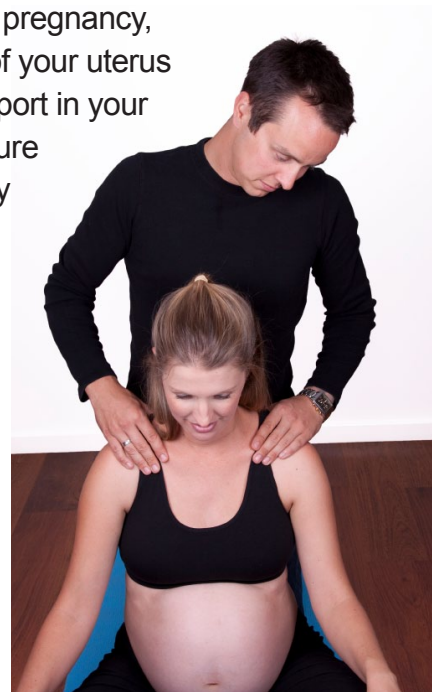




Massage

- Massage is a touch therapy, which relaxes muscles, stimulates circulation, lowers blood pressure, aids digestion and helps with excretion of toxins and other waste products. Touch relieves pain and releases pain-relieving “feel good” chemicals, Massage is usually performed using oil, eg grapeseed or sweet almond (but avoid if you are allergic to almonds). Regular pregnancy massage is relaxing, easing backache, headache and constipation; in labour, it relieves pain and can stimulate contractions.
- Direct massage of varicose veins, areas of thrombosis, burns, scalds, skin infections, open wounds or eczema should be avoided. If you have pre-eclampsia, a history of premature labour or a bleeding disorder, or are expecting twins, massage should be performed with caution. Avoid abdominal massage if you have had vaginal bleeding in pregnancy, especially if your placenta is on the anterior (front) wall of your uterus (you will find this information on your ultrasound scan report in your maternity notes). Deep massage, over certain acupuncture points in the lower back, should be avoided in pregnancy as it may trigger contractions. If you have epilepsy or major heart problems, avoid massage completely; if you have other medical or pregnancy complications, check with your midwife first.
- If your massage therapist uses aromatherapy oils, check that she is qualified to use them in pregnancy; if in doubt, ask her just to use a carrier oil.



Always inform your midwife if you are having massage treatments during pregnancy

For more individualised information on massage in pregnancy and childbirth, telephone 0906 400 6227 (calls charged at £1.50 per minute, from a BT landline; calls from mobiles and other networks may vary).