



# Discover Chiropractic

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## Chiropractic and the Fourth Trimester

During pregnancy, your spine and the soft tissues of your body undergo the most rapid transformation that they will go through in your entire life. The first part of this change happens over a nine-month period, but the second part of this change (the return to previous form) happens more rapidly, as the weight of the baby is suddenly no longer there. Your body is able to integrate these changes with more ease when you receive chiropractic care. In fact, many of the common symptoms during pregnancy, especially neck pain, back pain, headaches and heartburn, are related to the stress on your nervous system from this rapid change. Remember, the spine encases the central nervous system and when it is misaligned, it can put tension on the exiting nerves and decrease normal function. The same goes for the fourth trimester. Your spine is trying to adjust to the absence of the baby in your belly. Chiropractic adjustments aid beautifully in this process to realign your spine and pelvis.

Your spine is also very “soft” at the end of pregnancy. Your body has produced a hormone called relaxin to soften the joints and ligaments and allow for your pelvis to open wide and birth your baby. As you begin to nurse your baby and carry him in your arms, you may find that you feel back pain and headaches again because this softness allows your joints to become misaligned more easily. Once again, chiropractic is an excellent way to restore function and reduce pain and discomfort.

## Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding has many wonderful benefits, and one of them is helping mothers recover during the postpartum period. As your baby nurses, your body releases oxytocin, the love hormone.



Not only does this elevate your mood, but this hormone also causes your uterus to contract, aiding in the involution process. This powerful hormone helped you to make a baby, and birth a baby, and now it helps you to recover from childbirth. Breastfeeding also helps you to get more rest. That’s right! The contents of your breast milk change throughout the day. In the evening hours your milk contains higher levels of tryptophan, an amino acid that converts to serotonin which makes baby feel happy, which then converts to melatonin—the hormone that induces sleep. Melatonin levels in breast milk also continue to rise through the night, so by breastfeeding during the night, you will help baby to fall back to sleep faster, which helps everyone get more rest.

- Courtney Meltvedt, DC, *Pathways Magazine #45*

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