



ROUND LIGAMENT PAIN

One of the most common complaints of pregnancy is so-called round ligament pain. This is also known as round ligament strain or round ligament syndrome.

Round ligament pain is due to normal changes that take place as your body is transformed by pregnancy. Your uterus normally is the size of a pear. The round ligaments are two cord-like structures made of the same smooth muscle tissue as the rest of the uterus. They extend from the top of the uterus on either side down through the abdominal wall and the fibers terminate in the vulva. During pregnancy, they stretch and grow with the rest of the uterus, and this is sometimes painful.

Abdominal pain during pregnancy is common and is most often a result of round ligament pain. There are other, abnormal, treatable causes of pain that your doctor may want to evaluate. Therefore, any new or significant pain should be reported to your doctor.

Round ligament pain may occur on either or both sides, anywhere along the course of either ligament. It is often aggravated by walking, changing position in bed or by fetal movement but may occur for no apparent reason at all. It is most common in pregnancies after the first one and most common in the mid-trimester, although it may occur early or late in the pregnancy as well.

Its only symptom is sharp, cramping or stretching pain somewhere along the course of one of the ligaments. Sometimes it is severe enough to raise a question or some other condition such as appendicitis, kidney stones, placental abruption, or labor. However round ligament pain is a pain that should not be associated with nausea, diarrhea, fever, bleeding, or contractions you can feel with your hand. If this is the case the pain is from another source, and you should contact your physician.

Round ligament pain is not dangerous to your or your baby. The treatment consists of:

- Changing how you move – rising or sitting down more gradually, avoiding sudden movement – may decrease the spasms.
- Rest (lying on the opposite side may relieve pain).
- Applying heat (a heating pad or warm bath).
- A prenatal support such as the prenatal cradle may also help support the uterus and decrease round ligament pain.
- Talk with your doctor first, but you may be advised about the use of acetaminophen (Tylenol) to reduce pain.
- Often, the pain may ease as your pregnancy progresses.

If you have any questions or concerns that the cause of your pain may be something more serious, please contact our office or call the physician's exchange 262-6262.