

The Maine

SWITCH

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Prenatal massage plays key role for mom, baby

From decreasing blood pressure to just plain feeling pampered, there are plenty of benefits to massage for expecting moms.

"Prenatal massage is therapeutic bodywork that focuses on the special needs of the mother-to-be as her body goes through the dramatic changes of the childbirth experience," says Jessica Hastings of Portland's Head Games Salon.

Massage during pregnancy can:

- Decrease blood pressure;
- Reduce muscular-skeletal strain and pain;
- Reduce edema;
- Reduce anxiety and stress;
- Relieve fatigue, insomnia, headaches, leg pain, constipation, nausea and indigestion;
- Help keep skin supple to help prevent stretch marks;
- Strengthen the immune system.

Prenatal massage can also increase blood and lymph circulation. A woman's blood volume can increase by as much as 50 percent by the 9th month of pregnancy.

Before a massage, mothers-to-be should check with their doctor.

