THE LINK BETWEEN CESAREAN ADHESIONS AND CHRONIC PELVIC PAIN

BY: RACHEL GARMAN, LMT, CPMT

According to a report from WebMD Health News (March 23, 2010), there are now nearly 1 in 3 babies delivered by cesarean section. This statistic shows that cesarean section deliveries have reached an all-time high in recent years. While these surgical procedures can be a life-saving strategy for mothers and babies and are usually medically necessary, there are possible health concerns that can arise from cesarean births. Women should be aware of symptoms they may be experiencing in the short and long term following a cesarean delivery.

A cesarean birth requires cutting through layers of the abdominal muscles and the peritoneum—a thin membrane that lines the abdominal cavity and the internal organs. When it is cut from the uterus, the body responds to the inflammation of the incision by producing scar tissue. A process called fibrinolysis causes scar tissue to disappear after some time. However, cesarean section surgery restricts the blood flow to the peritoneum, which prevents fibrinolysis to take place. This results in the scar tissue forming into adhesions.

Surgical adhesions can cause pelvic pain and dysfunction to manifest any time after delivery, depending on the body’s response to them. These bands of fibrous tissue grow and eventually connect organs within the abdominal cavity, causing tension between the abdominal structures and pulling them out of alignment. Women may experience pain along the crest of the hips, lower back, the sacrum, and buttocks. Hip flexor muscles are also affected causing restricted leg movement as the muscles learn to favor the pain of the pelvic region. In addition, issues with lower digestion such as irritable bowel syndrome or constipation and pain during intercourse may be present.

Bodywork has been shown to be very effective in helping to relieve chronic pelvic pain. A skilled physical therapist or massage therapist can perform manual techniques to make fibrotic tissue more pliable in order for the organs to return to their original positioning or to release the adhesions completely. Massaging and stretching the abdominal cavity helps stimulate blood flow to the muscles and organs, assisting the healing process and relieving pain.

Prostate Cancer Research Study

Researchers at the National Institute of Health and the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health are conducting a study on The Role of Social Comparisons in Coping and Quality of Life following a Prostate Cancer Diagnosis. The UsTOO Prostate Cancer Awareness community is inviting prostate cancer patients to participate in this study, if interested. For more information about the goals of research and the participant survey visit: http://pc.nichd.nih.gov.

SPT Events

- **Austin Women’s Pelvic Pain Support Group** meets Monday, December 6th from 6-7pm at Sullivan Physical Therapy. This meeting will be open discussion.

- **Tips for Managing Pregnancy Discomfort:** SPT will be hosting a free class for pregnant women that will discuss safe strategies for managing pain and discomfort during pregnancy. This class will meet on Wednesday, December 15th from 6-7pm at SPT. Please RSVP by December 13th to rachel@sullivanphysicaltherapy.com. Space is limited to 10 attendees.
Austin Women’s Pelvic Pain Support Group:

Next support group meets at Sullivan Physical Therapy on Monday, December 6th at 6pm.

This meeting will be open discussion.

*Support group meets first Monday of every month at Sullivan Physical Therapy from 6-7pm.

Massage gift certificates and Go Local cards make a great holiday gift and you can purchase them at SPT!