

Is Your Pregnancy Missing Craniosacral Therapy



Gold Coast Doula asked Kelly Marie O'Brien Pahman to guest blog on the topic of craniosacral therapy. Kelly opened St. Brigid's Holistic Labor Care in 2009 where she works as a Holistic Doula and in 2014 she added St. Brigid's Craniosacral Center in order to support clients and their families with Craniosacral therapy. She has enjoyed working on everything from chronic pain , head trauma to the childbearing year. She lives in Grand Rapids MI with her brilliant and kind husband and their 4 year old son.



Several years ago I was pregnant with my son, I was also a doula and had come into a string of exceptionally long labors. I had five births in a row that took days. I found my skills were limited... we had "saved" them from c-sections but this left me shaken. Of the 40 or so births I had attended at the time this felt significant and lead to a turning point in my practice. I went into maternity leave ready to research and find a way to shorten long labors. In my research I found tons on optimal fetal positioning and chiropractic but was specifically drawn to craniosacral therapy. I was eager to learn a gentle and effective method of bodywork that powerfully impacted the childbearing year and beyond. It was then that I began to pursue training with the upledger institute and began seeing the valuable impact it had on the health of women in conception, pregnancy, birth and beyond.

Craniosacral Therapy (CST) is a gentle, effective and relaxing therapy . CST is a modality that uses light touch to aid in tissue release and enable the body to come into balance, allowing women and their babies to experience a healthier and more comfortable pregnancy. A session is very much like a massage session but much more gentle and you are fully clothed. Kate McKinnon gives a wonderful description in her video,

I was excited to incorporate this new tool in my practice. One client in particular, Heather, was on her third pregnancy and suffered pretty severe pubic pain. As a doula pubic pain was always a mystery and in my extensive toolbox I came up at a loss. You can imagine how thrilled I was when after one session I received this text from Heather:

“Still feeling amazing today after the CST! Still standing straight, no issues with hips or pubic bone. My mom even commented that I looked taller and was standing the best she has seen in a long time. I even feel more mentally and emotionally balanced.”

I also noticed shorter labors and other birth workers began sending me their clients in hopes that their breech babies would turn (and they did!).

So how does it work?

During pregnancy CST can bring relief to a myriad of issues for several reasons!

Because of its ability to help your body release tensions and imbalances it invites your body to be in alignment which enables optimal fetal positioning and can alleviate painful pregnancy complications such as migraines, severe pubic pain, low back pain and sciatic pain.

Craniosacral therapy also balances the **anatomic nervous system** (the part of us that regulates our very basic functions) which causes it to be exceptionally beneficial for anyone dealing with stress, high blood pressure, liver or kidney concerns, nausea or fatigue in pregnancy. I have worked on moms with HELLP syndrome and they have found significant relief. One mother mentioned she didn't recognize how stressed she was until she became so calm and she likened it to a 'yoga massage'. All this from a short 20 minute session! My personal experience has been that CST can help stabilize levels in HELLP and prolong the pregnancy to a healthier and more viable place for both the mother and the baby.

Labor and delivery

– What I personally notice in my clients who have received CST is a change in labor pattern, contractions seem to be shorter yet more effective. It is also noted (in Upledger's handout concerning pregnancy and cst) that while shorter labors are a common benefit of CST it isn't necessarily the goal. It may be made clear to both the mother and the therapist that a cesarean delivery may be what's best in that circumstance.

Receiving Care

While it would be ideal to receive treatment throughout your entire pregnancy, many women find exceptional benefit from even one treatment finding a great provider and discussing your goals will help you discern what frequency of visits you desire. You can find a care provider near you by checking out the **Upledger website**. It would be ideal to find someone who specializes and has training in supporting families during the childbearing year, the level of training a practitioner has received is listed on the Upledger site. If you find someone who offers craniosacral therapy in your area be sure to ask them how they received their training and what their experience is, skillset can vary greatly between providers so make sure you find a credible one who is right for you!

There are virtually no negative side effects and because the therapy is so gentle, the session so enjoyable, and the benefits are so great there is no reason not to set up an appointment today.

<http://goldcoastdoulas.com/craniosacral-therapy/>