

INNER CIRCLE INSIGHTS

4TH Trimester



Imagine you just delivered this beautiful bundle of joy and now three weeks later your back, hips, pelvis or pelvic region continue to hurt. You dread having to lift, carry or just walk up/down the steps with your baby. Or, you are crying every day, feel helpless or overwhelmed with the thought caring for your newborn. Coughing or sneezing has you leaking urine, when you've never had a problem. That beautiful bundle of joy isn't latching on to breast feed or you just aren't producing the milk you need. The OB saw you at your six week postpartum check-up and gave you the all clear to resume intercourse. You do, but experience pain or discomfort when you have never had any prior. You're too embarrassed to say anything so you suck it up and suffer in silence. The episiotomy or c section scar has

healed, but you now have itching, numbness or soreness in that area. You may have one of these symptoms. You may have all of them or somewhere in between. None of these scenarios or symptoms are a normal part of postpartum. You should not have to suffer with any of these. Help is available for physical and emotional/mental health complaints.

Postpartum care in the past has usually consisted of a six week check-up for the mother and total focus on the newborn. 40% of all women do not go to their postpartum visit¹. That's two in five women. Even lower numbers in women on Medicaid and those living in low resource neighborhoods. With the absence of healthcare for the mother, serious health problems can occur. Recently, the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology have recommended a "4th trimester". In this 4th trimester, the mother, as well as the baby, receive ongoing care. Not just a single visit for the mother. The 4th trimester consists of the time period from birth to three months post partum.

That time period is a time of major changes for a woman physically, socially, emotionally and psychologically. Providing healthcare to these women to address such issues as: mood and emotional problems, infant care and feeding, sexuality, contraception, birth spacing, sleep and fatigue as well as physical complaints must be a priority. A complete postpartum plan of care should be in place prior to delivery. Physical therapy assessment at three weeks postpartum with a comprehensive musculoskeletal and pelvic floor exam can address such issues as: urinary/fecal incontinence, sexual dysfunction, diastasis recti, painful scars(episiotomy/c-section), pelvic girdle/hip/back pain. These are not normal conditions that should be dismissed as a result of childbirth and pregnancy. This can all be addressed and corrected by a physical therapist to improve the mother's quality of life.

New mothers have multiple muscle imbalances that arise from pregnancy and delivery, on top of any underlying imbalances and restrictions that were existent prior. JFB Myofascial Release addresses the restrictions throughout the body that are not allowing freedom of movement or proper alignment. If a new mother is unable to activate her core or multiple muscle groups, she may have difficulty lifting and carrying her newborn. She may also worsen any separation in the abdominal wall when not using correct lifting techniques or body alignment.

¹ <https://www.nichq.org/insight/moms-deserve-better-care-fourth-trimester>

What can we at Inner Circle do for you? Our physical therapists can address these issues caused by either vaginal or c-section delivery or pregnancy itself, including:

*sacroiliac instability

* mid back/low back pain

*scar management issues

Improvement of the physical complaints can help ease the emotional turmoil due to pain, anxiety or difficulty with activities of daily living and caring for your child.

Inner Circle is a JFB Myofascial Release facility that is advanced in its evaluation and treatment of the female body and its unique issues. We focus on the “whole” pelvis & body. Evaluation consists of a detailed history and assessment of external structures such as, hip rotators, pelvic symmetry, sacral and coccygeal areas. Internal pelvic floor assessment will be performed, if necessary, by a female therapist trained in pelvic floor and JFB Myofascial Release to address what restrictions/imbalance are found during the evaluation.

After the exam, your therapist will explain the potential causes of your pain and the mechanical forces that affect your pelvis and surrounding tissues. The treatment will address your restrictions using skilled “hands on” techniques including: myofascial release, acupuncture, muscle energy, strain/counterstrain, mobilization, education, breathing techniques and stretching/strengthening. These skilled practices will assist in reducing and/or eliminating the undesirable restriction and restore normal function. No other facility in Bucks County has as much experience with manual therapy, adhesions and pelvic floor dysfunction as Inner Circle.

Properly addressing the unique issues that you as a new mother face, we can greatly improve your quality of life and ability to care for your newborn.

Professionally Yours

Jennifer Keeny, MSPT, ATC, CAPP- Pelvic

For an appointment please call (215) 860-3623

“The Natural Force Within Each of Us is the Greatest Healer of Disease” - Hippocrates