

Diastasis Recti is abdominal separation – loss of central integrity

Diastasis Recti, or abdominal separation, is the widening of the gap between your 'six pack' (rectus abdominus) muscles. The connective tissue (aponeurosis) that joins all the musculature of the abdominal sheath begins to stretch to accommodate the increased intra-abdominal pressure.

Not only in pregnancy!

However in pregnancy this means the tissue down the centre of your central belly muscle expands/moves apart to accommodate the growing uterus. Abdominal separation can affect 2 out of 3 mums post partum. It is repairable.

Some Stats and Figures

- For many women, **abdominal separation** remains widened at 8 weeks postpartum, and if left untreated or without rehabilitation, the gap at 8 weeks remains unchanged at 1 year postpartum. (Coldron et al 2008, Liaw et al 2011).
- 50% of women have some degree (symptomatic or asymptomatic) of **pelvic organ prolapse** (POP) postpartum.
- Of those postpartum women who have some (**stress urinary incontinence**) SUI at 12 weeks post partum 92% will still be at 5 years post partum.

Why are we all standing about accepting this?

ANSWERS

1 - Awareness that mums need rest and recovery time – and bonding and repair. A post baby body needs to be supported to recover and be taken out'.

2 – Follow what all traditional cultures did – mum was baby's bridge to the world an as such it is really a 4th trimester issue – not – 'ticked off' by medical professional at 6 week and back to life - but stay

1st week - In the bed

2nd week - On the bed

3rd week - Around the bed

And then still at home. . .Until bub and mum are a solid unit - totally in tune.

Belly binding!! The Golden Month - being looked after

Not only in pregnancy – now I am looking - I see terrible diastasis in everyone – and often very small children.

What next?

Finding a diastasis means now you are empowered and know what to do – do not accept limitation – or multiple trips to someone who says that they can ‘fix’ this – you need to yourself.

We need to back up – the physical is being given information/instructions – and we can change these. The tissues/organs and even blood and babies when pregnant are held in by the Spleen Qi – Yang Qi in general – the holding function is vitally important to be enhanced all through life.

All ‘old wives tales’ mentioned staying NO cold exposure and being out of winds – for a reason. The holding function is also allied to all other body states below.

Spleen Yang Qi Integrity

Transformation/digestion

Moving all from one state to another within your body.
Governs all digestive processing from production of saliva, moving food finally into Blood, Qi and body fluids, and out into urine and food residue eventually into feces



Healthy State

Transportation/circulation

Moving all from one place to another
Controls all fluids or lymphatic movement
Circulates blood throughout the body

Governs ascension of Qi

The pure aspect of every stage is moved upwards via Spleen Qi

Controls Qi in the muscles and limbs

Allows for a sense of “being able to” (opposite of fatigue)

Holding all in the right place

Blood in vessels, fluids in cells, babies to full term and organs and tissues where they should be.

**Governs optimal production & circulation of Qi.
Holding all in place with righteous Qi**

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What wastes the Qi?

Glad you asked. We have total control over our body – nothing is irreparable - or random/bad luck. We do need to look after ourselves – better. What will weaken the body? Any exposure to cold – sitting in cold loo seats/floors /standing on cold ground or on wet sand at the beach. Why?

The major acupuncture point Ki 1 starts on the soles of the feet. It spreads all cold straight into your uterus/belly and back.

Your Yang Qi thus your physical core weakened means things ‘let go’.

The recent idea that cold smoothies/juices/ice, any foods/fluids that feel cold going down – is in some way good for us. No elder will say so. Anything reduces the temperature in gut and weaken your digestive capacity.

You may say '[but cold feels so good](#)'. This is one problem - excessive heat/loss of body harmony) being 'medicated' by another.

Being a pregnant mum you do not have to feel hopeless. There are ways you can recover your integrity. When pregnant you can improve/ repair the loss of core strength. The body is in a state of change when making baby - essentially also remaking you!

What to do - All change starts with awareness.

Strengthen your Yang Qi so your body is more resilient.

Rest – always more than you 'want' (busy brain) as your body will 'bank' this forever after.

All traditional cultures will say – 'you white women do not know how to look after yourselves after birthing. Truth.

'Exercise' Prescription:

What not to do – exercises during pregnancy and post partum.

- Get up from lying straight – always roll to the side.
- Crunches, sit-ups, planks, and some Pilates moves like straight leg lifts, basically anything that places strain and sheering force on the abdominals. These moves can cause widening of your diastasis, pressure/ strain on your already weakened body. Contributes to lower back pain.
- High impact or contact sports are also not advised.

What to do

- You can help to both protect and heal your diastasis (aka abdominal separation) through good nutrition, posture and exercises to connect with your abdominals. Never sit up – but roll slightly to disengage from lying on your back.
- Eating protein and zinc rich foods, such as meat, fish, nuts, beans or eggs, and vitamin A rich foods like kale, broccoli, sweet potato can provide your body with the nutrients it requires to heal and repair.
- Eat plenty of fibre rich foods daily and drink an adequate amount of water to maintain healthy bowel habits – and don't delay the urge to empty your bowels!

- Being mindful of your posture (when you are nursing your baby, carrying other children or working) as is also important in your recovery of your abdominal muscles.

5 great exercises that are appropriate for abdominal separation and pelvic floor safe for pregnancy and post partum:

- Aerobic work such as bike, walking, deep water running, aqua aerobics, swimming and step classes
- Glute bridges
- Squats (can be to a chair or with assistance from a Swiss ball)
- Side planks from knees
- Belly breathing

Belly Breathing

Getting air in to chest, then belly and out again reverse order. Complete breaths assist engage all muscles - belly breathing is getting your pelvic floor, transverse abdominus, deep lower back muscles and diaphragm all moving together in sync. These 4 muscle sets make up your 'core'.

PLUS -

Inhale – let your belly expand and pelvic floor relax

Exhale – gently draw up your pelvic floor and imaging drawing your two bony hip points at the front of your pelvis closer together.

This can take some guidance to get right but integral to learning to reintegrate the pelvic floor and strengthen your core.



It is never too late to repair.
Ideally as it happens

Best time - immediately after baby has arrived – and as part of your restorative month (at least) home based tending-mum-as-the-most-important-part-of-a-family - programme.

'A stitch in time' ...