

Pregnancy Massage

Preamble

The issues surrounding the application of massage through all stages of pregnancy are specific. They include legal, medical, therapist training and protection of the consumer and the therapist.

Massage & Myotherapy Australia (Association) is of the opinion that massage during pregnancy is within the scope of practice of massage therapists, remedial massage therapists and myotherapists who have undertaken further specialised training in pregnancy massage other than the training received within the National Health Training Package (HLT)ⁱ.

To avoid ethical complaints in relation to massage during pregnancy, the client must have available to them adequate information about the risks involved throughout all stages of pregnancy and informed consent prior to the treatment must be obtained.

Aim

This position statement is to serve as a context for therapists who provide massage treatments during pregnancy and to provide a platform from where the National Ethics Committee (NEC) can make an informed determination in relation to any complaints and for the National Education Committee (NEDC) to determine appropriate levels of training.

This position statement should be read in conjunction with the Association's Code of Ethics and Standards of Practiceⁱⁱ, the Pregnancy Massage Guidelinesⁱⁱⁱ, and in combination with the practitioners' level of education and the practitioners own scope of practice.

The Association's Board of Directors serves to protect both the membership and the public by adopting this position statement which is resolutely linked to the overall policy of the Code of Ethics and the Standards of Practice.

Process

Every massage therapist has the right to make the decision as to the appropriateness of massage during pregnancy, and in consultation with the client. However, decision making and treatment protocols should be consistent, and in context, with the complexities of the pathophysiology and multi-system changes unique to pregnancy and within the scope of practice of the practitioner.

Pregnancy massage should not be considered without adequate assessment of the client. A written medical clearance is required where the health of the client and/or the child has potential of compromise or is compromised. It is a recommendation to minimize risk by aligning pregnancy massage treatments with pre-natal check-ups. This approach ensures the integrity of the therapist (scope of practice); that the client has the most relevant health information in regard to themselves and their baby, and in consideration of the therapeutic relationship.

A health care worker must encourage clients to inform their treating medical practitioner (if any) of the treatments or care being provided^{iv}.

Massage therapists should never, under any circumstance, proceed with treating the pregnant person without first obtaining written “informed consent” having provided the client with information on how the massage will be performed and of any associated risks.

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- i. <https://training.gov.au/>
 - ii. AAMT Code of Ethics
 - iii. AAMT Pregnancy Massage Guidelines
 - iv. Victorian Department of Health on behalf of the Australian Ministers Advisory Council, 2015