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## Which type of pregnancy pillow is best for you?

Pregnancy pillows can work wonders during pregnancy, providing extra comfort and easing aches and pains as your body changes. They have seen an increase in popularity over recent years, and can even be used once your baby is born.

### What is a pregnancy pillow used for?

A pregnancy pillow is designed specially to support the changing contours and curves of [your body during pregnancy](#).

As other pain relief options might not be suitable while you are pregnant, a pregnancy pillow could be the next best thing for easing any uncomfortable [pregnancy symptoms](#).

As your body changes and your belly grows throughout pregnancy, your shape will be unique. In this instance, a regular pillow is unlikely to work as a support. This means that a maternity pillow that has been designed to mould to your bump and additional weight can help protect you from [aches and pains](#).

Using a regular pillow instead of a pregnancy pillow can leave you more vulnerable to:

- Back pain.
- A stiff pelvis.
- Leg cramps.
- Insomnia due to restlessness.

### When should I start using a pregnancy pillow?

Many people find pregnancy pillows most useful in the latter stages of pregnancy, as there can be a great deal of discomfort due to a lack of support while [gaining weight](#). However, there is no set recommended time for when you should start using one.

## How to choose a pregnancy pillow

There are various pregnancy pillows available depending on how you [prefer to sleep](#) and what stage in pregnancy you are in. Choosing the right maternity pillow can be a challenge if you aren't sure what type to get or how specific ones can help. Therefore, you should consider the following when choosing the right pillow for you:

### Size

Pregnancy pillows vary in size, from smaller wedges to large U-shaped pillows. Size is something to consider before buying as you take into account the extent of your bump, what you need support with, and whether there will be a partner in bed with you.

### Shape

The best-shaped pregnancy pillow for you depends on the areas where you are experiencing pain or discomfort. For example, a pregnancy pillow that runs parallel to your body might be best if you have back pain. A tip to remember is that many people tend to move around during the night, which is likely to be the case if pregnancy is making you restless. Therefore, you might need to adjust your pillow as you change positions.

### Material

The material of your pillow is purely down to personal preference. For example, a more breathable pregnancy pillow, such as one with a cotton cover, might be best if you sweat during the night.

Memory foam pregnancy pillows can also offer extra comfort since they hug your body, support a wide range of sleeping positions and prevent sinkage.

## What type of pregnancy pillow is best?

As Figure 1 shows, there are several types of pregnancy pillows and it's important to ensure you choose the most suitable one.

## **U-shaped pregnancy pillow**

Many expectant parents prefer U-shaped pillows due to their length and the fact that they follow the natural curve of their bodies. They do not move around during the night, provide extra comfort and stay in shape while not being used.

Extra support for your spine while pregnant is particularly important. A U-shaped pillow can assist with this as they are designed for full body support – so both the front and back of your body can benefit.

## **C-shaped pregnancy pillow**

A C-shaped pillow is good to place underneath your baby bump. They tend to be the next best option in pregnancy for those who don't want their pillow taking up as much space as a U-shaped one.

However, a C-shaped pillow might not offer the same support for your spine. It can support your neck, legs and hips, though, and is perfect for use either in bed or while lying on the couch.

## **A pregnancy wedge pillow**

A pregnancy wedge pillow is a simple solution for nighttime support. It can be positioned either underneath your belly, under your back or between your knees. Wedges are particularly good for travelling since they are smaller and can double up as a neck support in a car or on a plane.

## **Inflatable pregnancy pillow**

An inflatable maternity pillow might not be practical in all situations, but it is a good alternative if other options haven't worked. Inflatable pillows have a hole for you to rest your bump in and can be easily deflated and inflated again, so they take up less space and are more portable. They can feel like lying on a pool float and many are adjustable, with ventilated openings.

# **Benefits of pregnancy pillows**

## **Alleviate aches and pains**

Pregnancy pillows can offer support against aches and pains. This discomfort can be more likely as you [gain weight during pregnancy](#), as the pressure and stress on your back, hips and legs increases.

Pillows can support you lying on your side during later pregnancy and create more comfort if you have issues such as pelvic girdle pain.

Additionally, a pillow can help to prevent aches and pains if you place it along the natural curve of your spine. If your pillow is used to elevate your ankles, it can also help to reduce swelling.

### **Enhance blood circulation**

Pregnancy pillows can make sleeping on your side more comfortable, which becomes increasingly awkward as [your bump grows](#). Sleeping on your side allows for better blood circulation. Sleeping on your left side is recommended over the right, as it makes your heart's job easier and prevents the baby's weight from applying pressure to the large vein - called the inferior vena cava - that carries blood back to your heart.

### **Increase sleeping hours**

Pregnancy pillows can allow for a deeper, more relaxed sleep. This is key to improving your mental and emotional [well-being while pregnant](#), as getting enough rest is important to keeping you safe and your baby healthy.

The best way to sleep with a pregnancy pillow is by positioning it to support your belly, legs and back. This will help you to sleep better whether you're a back-sleeper, side-sleeper, or stomach-sleeper.

## **Uses of pregnancy pillows after childbirth**

Pregnancy pillows can even be useful after your baby has been born if you're conscious of spending money on something that you will only use for a few months. For example, after having a baby, a pregnancy pillow can double up as a nursing pillow or feeding pillow for [breastfeeding](#). It's important to note that you should not 'co-sleep' - sleep in the same bed - with your baby, as this may increase the risk of [sudden infant death \(cot death\)](#).

The multiple uses of your pregnancy pillow are something to consider when trying to find the right one. If it is multi-functional, it will be better value for money and could make your life as a new parent easier too.

## How much is a pregnancy pillow?

Pregnancy pillows vary in cost, from rather low priced to more expensive. But, while some carry a price tag of over £100, pregnancy pillows tend to be relatively inexpensive and range between £20-£60, depending on the type and where you buy it from.

## Where can you buy pregnancy pillows?

Thanks to their surge in popularity, pregnancy pillows can be found in stores and online for a range of prices.

You can buy them on sites such as Amazon, from home stores like Dunelm, health stores like Boots, or baby stores such as Mamas and Papas.

If you are unsure of where to look for a pregnancy pillow or what type is best for you, your midwife can offer advice.

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