



EPISODE 008 — CHIROPRACTIC AND PREGNANCY

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SHOW NOTES



Spinal Column Radio host,
Dr. Thomas Lamar

Title: Chiropractic and Pregnancy

Episode Number: 008

Host: Dr. Thomas Lamar

Show Date: 03/12/2010

Run Time: 29:28

Description:

Chiropractic and Pregnancy are a natural fit. In this episode, Dr. Lamar teaches you why you need a chiropractor on your health care team when you're pregnant. Plus, special guest and patient, Liz Berg, joins the conversation to share her pregnancy stories and how chiropractic played a key role.



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Journal of Chiropractic Medicine. [Pregnancy and chiropractic: a narrative review of the literature.](#) June 2007.



Liz Berg joins us in-studio to talk about her "Chiropractic and Pregnancy" story.

[Ragner Relay del Sol](#) – 200 mile relay in Arizona that Liz participated in (Feb 26 and 27).

Dr. Lamar's article: [Pregnancy — A Topic Close to Home](#)



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Transcript:

Spinal Column Radio, episode number eight .
Coming up on Spinal Column Radio — Chiropractic and Pregnancy.

[intro theme music]



And welcome back to another exciting and information packed episode of Spinal Column Radio. My name is Dr. Thomas Lamar, chiropractor and Dad of 6. And this is the podcast that gets you to think. To think about your health in a whole new way. We're the podcast for your backbone... the podcast *with backbone*. Who knew that spinal education could be this much fun?

We'd like to invite you to visit our podcast website at spinalcolumnradio.com where you can learn more about us, check out our world-renown "What's a Podcast?" page, and can access the show notes for this episode. Also, we encourage you to leave comments and ask questions through our website, or, if you prefer, you can email me using DrLamar AT spinalcolumnradio DOT com.

[transitional sound effect]

Well, today we are talking about Chiropractic and Pregnancy.... and a little later on in the program, one of my patients, Liz Berg, will be joining us in studio to tell us her story, but first let's lay a bit of a foundation. ...Because the idea of "Chiropractic and Pregnancy" in the same sentence is new to a lot of people... and many have never even stopped to consider it... But when you think about it, Chiropractic and Pregnancy, makes a whole lot of sense and is really a good fit.

From the moment that EPT stick gives you the two pink lines (and boy my wife and I have seen that a number of times), you want to do everything in your power to prepare for a healthy baby. You eat nutritious foods. You exercise. You take prenatal vitamins. You attend childbirth classes. You obtain prenatal care with your doctor or midwife. You avoid alcohol, secondhand smoke (and firsthand smoke).... and you avoid medications.

But unfortunately, for many expectant mothers, the joy of their impending birth is diminished by pain and discomfort. But it needn't necessarily be that way for women who add a chiropractor to their pregnancy health care team. In fact, in a recent write-up in the Journal of Chiropractic Medicine (I'll put a link to the abstract in the show notes)... it pointed out that between 75-84% of pregnant ladies under chiropractic care have found relief from their pregnancy pains.

Before I go on, I want to thank my Librarian Friend, Linda, down at my Alma Mater at the Southern California University of Health Sciences for supplying me with the full text version of this article. Thank you Linda... standby though I'll probably be calling you again in the near future.

The article, by the way, is entitled "Pregnancy and chiropractic: a narrative review of the literature." And in this article it is reported that 50% of all pregnant women experience back pain during their pregnancy and that 50-75% of women experience back pain during labor. But because pain relieving drugs are ill-advised... many ladies feel like their hands are tied — only 21% of these back pain sufferers, according to the article, turn to their medical doctor for help — making their 40 week term more like a "sentence," than a time to cherish and enjoy.

I remember several years ago, a medical doctor I know telephoned my office. And basically he said, "Hey Tom, I've got a pregnant woman here in my office that is having incredible back pain, and she's due any day now. ...But I have nothing to offer her to relieve her of her pain without putting the baby at risk. Can *you* do anything?" Well, I told him that there was a very good chance that I could and for him to send her right over. Well, she arrived about an hour later along with her husband... and I don't know who looked worse... the woman in obvious pain who looked like she could have had the baby right there in my office, or the poor husband who looked like he hadn't had a wink of sleep for at least a week. As it turns out, the only way that his wife would experience any relief at all was for him to press his hand in the small of her back, applying constant pressure. He would do this so she could sleep at night. Well, long story short, I was able to adjust her spine, and she felt immediate relief. I saw her the next day and adjusted her again, and she was feeling considerably better... and her husband looked 100% better as well. She delivered the following day (in hospital, I might add).

So how is it that chiropractic helps?

Well to answer this question, consider that a woman during her pregnancy literally undergoes a metamorphosis. Her body changes everyday to meet the demanding needs of her developing child. Supporting ligaments of her growing womb pull and tug on the her spine. We see increases of the circulating hormones of estrogen, progesterone, and relaxin that act to soften and relax the connective tissues and ligaments of her joints — making them more mobile and thus more prone to injury and pain. Add to this the obvious changes in her center of gravity and the postural imbalances it creates... and when you look at all of these things... you start to realize that you have a woman who is "ripe and ready" to experience the drug-free benefits of chiropractic care by offering mechanical balance to her ever changing body.

And let's not forget the delicate nerves that exit out between each of the vertebrae. The mechanical debacle that pregnancy brings about to a woman's spine can pinch and irritate these nerves... nerves that can certainly bring about pain and discomfort, but, more importantly, nerves that when interfered with can reduce the body's ability to function at its full health potential.

And this is so key... because, I find that many health issues that women have *prior* to their pregnancies become amplified *during* their pregnancies. And this sometimes means conditions that were "skating under the radar," in a subclinical sense... (gestational diabetes and pregnancy induced carpal tunnel syndrome are some that come to mind)... well these and other conditions can "rear their heads" when a woman's body is met with the demanding challenge of physically supporting the life of another human being.

So, in other words, by administering gentle chiropractic adjustments on a regular basis to a woman's spine during her pregnancy — and by the way, it's very safe for both Mom and Baby and provisions are made in adjusting technique and, sometimes, the actual adjusting table itself can be set up to accommodate the pregnancy —... but by getting chiropractic adjustments on a regular basis, the pregnant female has the potential to not only enable her body to be more comfortable, but, simply, for her body to *function* better, ultimately allowing her to have a healthier pregnancy.

And along that line of thinking, I had a chance to sit down with one of my long time chiropractic patients, Liz Berg, to talk about how chiropractic played a pivotal role in one of her pregnancies. Here's her story.....

[transitional music]

Dr. Lamar: Well Liz, I want to welcome you to Spinal Column Radio!

Liz: Thank you very much... I'm glad to be here.

Dr. L: You know, I so excited that you are here and it's for many reasons... obviously we are going to talk about pregnancy and chiropractic... that's the main reason you are here... but, kind of on a side note, I'm excited because not only are you our first "in-studio guest," but your being here... I know that men would understand this (and I'm sure ladies would too)... but when you're a guy and you want to do... let's say you're going to do this project around the house — like build a deck. And in order to build that deck you need one extra tool to make it happen. And that gives you an excuse, or justification, to go out and buy that tool at Home Depot... such is the case with this interview. Being the first interview — we needed another microphone... And so, "Oh shucks, I have to buy another Heil PR-40 for..." — because we couldn't put you on the "inferior" microphone I used as a kid.

Liz: Oh no... We wouldn't want that...

Dr. L: ...It just wouldn't sound good. So Liz, I'm excited that you are here, for a number of reasons. And let's get started and talk about the main reason you are here. When I was thinking of doing the podcast for Chiropractic and Pregnancy, your name just came right up to the top... And I said, "You know, Liz has such a great story to share." Now Liz, you are a patient of mine.

Liz: Yes.

Dr. L: And I'm not paying you to be here.

Liz: That is correct.

Dr. L: However, my wife is going to feed you lunch after.

Liz: Yes, I am getting lunch out of the situation.

Dr. L: There's no such thing as a free lunch. [Liz laughs]... But your name came up to the top... And I was like, "You know, Liz has such a great story to share" — And granted this maybe this won't apply to everybody that's listening, but Liz I'd like it if you could tell us a little bit about your pregnancy. Now you have four wonderful children, who are in the next room over —

Liz: I do have four kids, yes.

Dr. L: And, as wonderful as your kids are, your pregnancies weren't necessarily the best.

Liz: No, they were all very difficult.

Dr. L: Yes. Take us back if you would to, let's say, your first pregnancy. Give us kind of a little background story on that and what made it so difficult.

Liz: Well it started out as, you know, normal pregnancy. I was twenty-nine, I think, at the time. And, good health... started out great... And about half way through the pregnancy my blood pressure started becoming an issue. And my doctor.. I had a fabulous obstetrician... and he decided to send me over to the University of Washington to determine what was causing the blood pressure issue. And got put on some medication, and I was able to get through probably the next ten weeks. Then overnight, the blood pressure just went through the roof, and I was induced. I ended up having a C-section, and she was almost four weeks early — but healthy. I recovered quickly and didn't have any problems after the pregnancy. So, all and all it was okay, but it was very hard on my body.

Dr. L: So that was Baby #1...

Liz: That was Baby #1.

Dr. L: And that was a C-section. You weren't planning on a C-section...

Liz: No. Had gone to Bradley classes... was all expecting no drugs... It was going to be fabulous... and it was going to go so easily, and that was not the case.

Dr. L: And, so then you fast forward a couple of years...

Liz: Couple of years later I got pregnant with my second one... And same situation, started off real good... but my doctor wanted to be more preventative... and so, he sent me over to the university again... and they got me started on medication. Things seemed to be going smoothly. They thought that I'd go to term, no problem. But, probably about thirty weeks, it started happening again. And she was also delivered four weeks early by C-section.

Dr. L: Now, *what* started happening again?

Liz: The blood pressure.... just for some reason goes out of control.

Dr. L: Started ramping up.

Liz: Yeah. Typical preeclampsia symptoms.

Dr. L: Correct.

Liz: And with Ema, who's my second... they were concerned that she was going to be too early, so they had to do, I guess, an amnio at that point to be able to determine that her lungs were developed enough to be born... and thankfully she was... and she was delivered the day after they did that test... and she was born healthy!.. Very small but healthy. And so, same situation with the first pregnancy... my body recovered just fine. I didn't have any problems after the pregnancy. And I continued with my normal activities that I did prior to being pregnant.

Dr. L: Baby #3 comes along. Now what is different about the third pregnancy?

Liz: Well, in-between my second and third — Ema and my third being William — is I had started to participate in Triathlons and doing a lot more running. So, at that point, that's when I had started to see you for adjustments to help with my knees and all those kind of things since I was becoming so much more active — versus just a weekend runner. At the point that I had gotten pregnant with me third, William, I was still seeing you on a monthly basis. So we just continued with the monthly treatments... you know, coming in once a month for adjustments... and I found, in the beginning of the pregnancy, that I wasn't having any of the other symptoms that I had had with the other two girls — of just, the blood pressure slowly start creeping up... all those things... And so my doctor decided, "You know what? Let's just see what happens on this one." And I continued with the adjustments... monthly for first, I think, six months of the pregnancy. And then after that we started doing them every two weeks.

Dr. L: Right.

Liz: And ended up going to term with William. And he was a big boy. He was almost eight pounds — which the girls were six pounds...

Dr. L: Yeah, so quite an increase for you.

Liz: Very different pregnancy. I felt fabulous the entire time... never had any issue of blood pressure... edema... any of that. He was delivered C-section, but that was because the other two pregnancies had also been C-section.

Dr. L: Right. That had already been kind of predetermined. But, just a world of difference and...

Liz: Huge difference. Huge difference.

Dr. L: ... renewed your feeling of "Oh, *this* is what it's supposed to be like!"

Liz: Exactly! "Oh this is what a normal pregnancy is like! I like that!" [Liz laughs]

Dr. L: So Baby #3... William was born...

Liz: William's born... healthy... big... all those things. And then we made the choice to go ahead and have Baby #4. And I had at that point....

Dr. L: And my Baby #5 just walked in the door... [Liz laughs] ...this is the beauty of... we'll just keep going here... Okay. We're going to have to press pause and take care of Clayton. Hang on.

[short musical interlude]

Dr. L: Okay, so we gently escorted Clayton out of the studio with the help of Mother.... But to get back to our line of talking... you were just about ready to tell us about Baby #4.

Liz: Yes, Baby #4, Anton. He came along, and at that point we had moved out to Seabeck — which is about 45 minutes from your office. So, I have to say, I was not nearly as dedicated about getting there every month...

Dr. L: Darn!...[Liz laughs]... Note to self: make house calls.

Liz: That would be fabulous.... And so, the pregnancy started off just fine. And probably about half way through, there were slight indicators that there was going to be more problems with blood pressure. So, I started going in regularly to my doctor and having non-stress tests... and they became *very* concerned with him. He was struggling, and his heart rate was not consistent.... And so I was in and out of the hospital for a couple of weeks. And at one point my blood pressure had gotten so high that my doctor was concerned for *me*... and the baby also. So, I was in the hospital just for observation. They wanted to keep me overnight, and I woke up in the middle of the night to the nurses turning me upside down and telling me you're going in for an emergency C-section right this second.... the baby is struggling... we can't get his heart rate back up....

Dr. L: Wait. Backup. They turned you *upside down*?

Liz: Well, they put my head down on the bed... you know normally your head is up... well, they put my head down. So...

Dr. L: Oh ya...

Liz: Ya.... So at this point, I'm kind of panicking... because the nurses seem to be panicking. Luckily they were able to get his heart rate back up. And so, we had enough time for my doctor to get in... and did a C-section... and Anton was born healthy very — not very small, but he was under six pounds. And, things seemed to be okay. We thought, "Okay, well this is going to be just fine, I'll bounce back like I had been with all of the other pregnancies." ...And that wasn't

the case. At this point, I went home... and he was born on Christmas Eve... and so I was able to leave the hospital on Christmas Day...

Dr. L: Wow... Merry Christmas! [Liz laughs]

Liz: Exactly... So, I got home, and my blood pressure — unbeknownst to me — was still sky high. And, I was at home for three or four days... and the swelling was unbelievable... I could not get my shoes on... I could not walk because my ankles were so swollen... And finally Andrew told me, "We need to get you back into the hospital." ...And so I went and saw my doctor, and he was very concerned... almost put me *back* in the hospital because pulmonary edema was a concern. But he decided that he'd get me started on some medication and see if that could solve the problem. Thankfully, it worked, and I was able to... you know, all the swelling went down, my blood pressure went down... but it was really, really hard on my body. And my doctor said, "You're done... you can't have anymore kids. It's just too hard for you, and it's too hard on the baby."

...And so, you look back on the four separate pregnancies, the one that was easiest on *my* body... easiest on the baby... was the one that I had chiropractic care on, and it made a big, big difference.

Dr. L: Well, absolutely. And while we can't say this with 100 percent, you know, certainty, your story does kind of lend itself to the scientific method. Because, it's like you have two babies and you have blood pressure issues... and then you try chiropractic — and nothing really else has changed — and you have a great pregnancy — a great experience. And then, for factors that are understandable, you move away and chiropractic just isn't as feasible and you drop out of that... and now you have another pregnancy that... really kind of seems like the worst out of all four...

Liz: Yes, it definitely was the worst. It was the worst for myself... it was the worst for the baby... and, you know, thankfully all is good in the end but, in hindsight, had I put some more energy into it, I would have gone and had chiropractic... I would have gotten adjusted every month.

Dr. L: Well, suddenly forty-five minute drives seem just fine! [Liz laughs]

Liz: ... had I known.

Dr. L: ... Especially if you are listening to Spinal Column Radio... [Liz laughs]... during your drive time.

Liz: That's right it makes the time pass so quickly...

Dr. L: Oh ya... well that depends on the episode. [Liz laughs]...

Now, with your pregnancies, because they were all C-section, we really can't speak to whether chiropractic helped with you labor, but for a lot of ladies it does and it makes the labor go so much easier... and my wife could certainly talk about how each of our pregnancies were different with the labor and how chiropractic helped with that... But then there's the whole postpartum adjustments... and especially if you have a woman who has had a vaginal delivery, getting an adjustment shortly afterwards is so, so important.

Liz: Oh, definitely.

Dr. L: ... But even for someone who has undergone a C-section. Your body does not know — well your brain knows, but your body doesn't know — that you are going to have a C-section. So it is preparing to have a vaginal delivery...

Liz: Exactly.

Dr. L: ...regardless. And there is a hormone that courses through your body called relaxin during the last days there.. that prepares, if you will, a bowling ball to pass through your pelvis.... and so everything loosens up.... and because of that — depending on how the labor goes, and what not, or just the mechanics involved — you can have a woman who is spinally misaligned. ...And then they have the baby... and then as that hormone starts to dissipate and go out of the system... now they are out of alignment and things begin to “tighten” back up, if you will.

Liz: Exactly.

Dr. L: ... and they have these issues. And I can't tell you how many women have come into my office with, say, back pain, and I ask them how it came about... and they say, “You know, it all started when I had Johnny.” ...And it's just one of those things that is so important... so even for a lady who has had a C-section — such as yourself — I really highly encourage, as soon as they feel that they have kind of gotten over the abdominal surgery, to make it in so we can see how things are lined up —

Liz: Well, I remember after one of the boys — either William or Anton — that I had come in after they were delivered because my pubis [bone] was out... and I felt like I was going to, you know, break like a wishbone. And I came in and that is what it was... and it wasn't a vaginal delivery and yet I was still experiencing what you would from a vaginal delivery. So I can definitely see where... well, you know you've got this extra how many pounds hanging down around your stomach... and down on your hips... and it's got to throw things out.

Dr. L: Everything changes.... the whole “waddle gait” [Liz laughs]... there's something very definite about a pregnant woman and how she moves...

Liz: That's right. Your center of gravity changes.

Dr. L: Exactly. It's so important that you get adjusted afterwards....

Now, just to kind of wrap things up... you know, we are talking about how your pregnancies weren't exactly...

Liz: ...ideal...

Dr. L: ...ideal... [Liz laughs]... but let's kind of bring things back into perspective... because... four wonderful children —

Liz: Yes.

Dr. L: — have come out of these pregnancies — one of the pregnancies was great, but three weren't — but still, four wonderful children ... and, you know, it's all worth it, wouldn't you say?

Liz: It is... oh 110 times worth it! ...I can't even imagine not having them. The are such a joy to us, and they add so much to our family... and, you know, the pregnancy a very short time in the whole life... and I *enjoyed* my pregnancies — even though they weren't easy — I *enjoyed* being pregnant, and I enjoyed every aspect of it... until, you know, you're kind of in crisis mode... but... oh ya, I wouldn't change any of it besides having chiropractic care... for all of them. [Liz laughs].

Dr. L: Well said.

Liz: We're just blessed that they are healthy, and happy, and pretty good natured.

Dr. L: And one more thing that I wanted to add just to give a little more background on yourself... And that is... Liz — if you've never met her — she is a very physically fit woman. So we're not talking about a woman here who's had some lifestyle issues where she's unhealthy... and really her body's already being taxed, and then she decides to get pregnant on top of that... and low and behold... "Ya we knew it!"... she was going to have all sorts of problems with the pregnancy with the blood pressure and what not.... But *you* are actually, you know we are recording this in the middle of February and this podcast will actually come out in the beginning of March... But in the next couple of weeks you are be involved in a "Mega Marathon Relay!" [Liz laughs]... why don't you tell us a little bit about that.

Liz: Oh, I don't know. You make it sound probably more impressive than it actually is... but...

Dr. L: You know, I am impressed. [Liz laughs] Anytime anyone can run more than a mile... I am impressed!

Liz: Well, it is a team relay... and it's over 200 miles and you run 24 hours a day until you've got all your mileage done... and there's 12 team members... and there's six people per van... so there's two vans... and you basically "leap frog" throughout the entire race. One person runs, you know, 10 miles... and then the next person jumps out and runs six miles... and so you just "leap frog" until you've gotten all the mileage done and hopefully you're in first place at the end.

Dr. L: And this is going to be where?

Liz: This is down in Arizona this time. We went and participated in one in Minneapolis over the summer of last year... and this one's down in Arizona... it starts up in Prescott, I believe, and then goes down to Mesa. So, it should be a good time.

Dr. L: Oh wow.

Liz: Ya.

Dr. L: Very cool. Hey, there's your kids outside the window.

Liz: Oh, there you go...

Dr. L: Okay... [Liz laughs]... so before we wrap up... you know, you're in front of the microphone here and we have an audience of at least — well, my mother and your mother... [Liz laughs]... No seriously —

Liz: And my husband, so we've got an audience of three.

Dr. L: Okay, so we have an audience of three — at least — but I'd like to think that there is a whole lot more... and if the stats are correct, it looks like we have listeners from around the world... If you could say, you know... this is your chance to maybe share one final thought on chiropractic and pregnancy, that if there is somebody out there that is pregnant right now... what would you say to that person?

Liz: I would say that it is so beneficial... that you have to try it. It's not going to hurt you in any way. Even if you don't see the benefit that I saw... You're still going to get something from it. It's so uninvasive that it's worth your time. It takes 15 minutes and the upside benefit of it so outweighs the time you have to take just to get to the office. [Liz laughs]

Dr. L: And with that, I think we'll wrap things up. Liz thank you so much for joining us.

Liz: My pleasure. Thank you for having me.

Dr. L: It's been fun... alright... and we'll have lunch!

Liz: Excellent!

[transitional music]

And, if I recall correctly, my wife, Keri, whipped up a pretty tasty lunch for the 14 of us. We certainly enjoyed having the Berg's out.

A couple more things I want to point out... and I know that we're running a little long this time, so I'll keep it short. Liz's story... is just that... it's her story. Yours may vary. But I felt that it was a good example of how chiropractic played a key role in helping one woman experience a healthy pregnancy.

Also, we mentioned in the interview that chiropractic can help women who are experiencing back pain during their labor. In somewhat of a related thread, in the Journal of Chiropractic Medicine article that I referenced at the top of the program, they reported that on average labor times are shortened by 25% for women under chiropractic care for their first pregnancy.... 31% for those women with multiple births under their belts. That alone, should be motivation to consider chiropractic.

Well, there is certainly more to be said on the topic of chiropractic and pregnancy... topics that will hopefully find their way into future podcasts. If you're interested, I did author an article on the subject a while back, and you can find that in the show notes... and the great things about this article was that it actually went to press hours after we gave birth to our first child, Paige, and the editor was able to put in a short announcement about it at the end of the article.... Paige by the way is now twelve and a half.

[outro theme music]

Okay, that's a wrap! Sure hope this subject was of value to you, and that perhaps you'll consider adding a chiropractor to your pregnancy health care team. Once again, thank you to Liz Berg for joining us in-studio. Have questions or comments? Send them through our website in the comments section of this podcast. Also, for those of you listening to us via iTunes, if you are enjoying our shows, helps us out by giving us a rating on iTunes.com.

Spinal Column Radio would like to remind you that true health comes from the inside out — not outside in. As such, the content of this podcast, along with the show notes and related links, is not intended to cure, diagnose, treat, or prevent any disease. But, instead, is meant to inform and inspire you in asking better questions regarding your health. Since the circumstances surrounding your particular situation are unique, you are encouraged to consult with a Doctor of Chiropractic — or other health care practitioner of your choosing.

Next time on Spinal Column Radio, we're going to talk about a condition that a lot of people have but is often misdiagnosed, or even overlooked: the unstable pelvis. That's in two weeks. So, until then, for my son Logan, tweaking the knobs on the sound board, this is Dr. Thomas Lamar, your podcast chiropractor.

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