

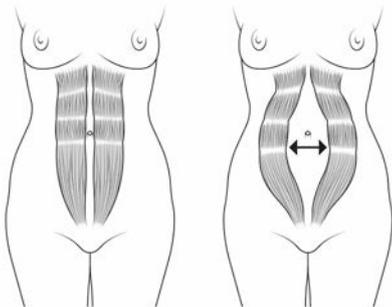


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# ABDOMINAL MUSCLE SEPARATION OR DIASTASIS

## What is an Abdominal Muscle Separation?

An Abdominal Muscle Separation is the separation of the long muscles of the abdomen. It is also known as a 'diastasis' or "DRAM".



## What causes this separation?

A combination of factors during pregnancy can cause a separation of the abdominal muscles to occur. These include:

- hormonal changes
- weight gain
- abdominal muscle weakness and stretching of the muscles as your baby grows.

## What it might mean to you

A separation is a normal safety mechanism to avoid the muscles tearing as your baby grows. It only becomes a problem if the muscles stay separated postnatally. Stretched and separated muscles do not provide full support for your back and may increase the incidence of back pain.

## What can be done to help?

- Exercises to strengthen the deep abdominal muscles.
- Wear an abdominal support, such as Tubigrip™, or firm compressive underwear.

## Avoid sit-ups or abdominal crunches until the separation resolves.

- Roll when getting into or out of bed.
- Minimise lifting anything heavier than your baby or anything that causes your tummy to bulge with strain.

## Deep abdominal muscle strengthening exercises

1. Begin your exercise in one of the following positions; side lying, lying on your back, sitting, standing or 4-point kneeling.
2. Draw your lower tummy in towards your spine.
3. Hold for 5–10 seconds while breathing normally.
4. Rest and repeat 8–12 times.
5. Repeat this set of exercises 3 times each day.



## How to monitor the recovery of your Abdominal Muscle Separation

- Lie on your back with your knees bent place your fingertips across your belly at the level of your belly button.
- Lift your head and shoulders away from the floor (a curl-up) and feel for the sides of your abdominal muscles coming together.
- If you can feel a gap wider than one finger then you may still have a separation.

## For more information or advice

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