

MAUKA ★ MAKA

HONOLULU STAR-BULLETIN / SECTION G

DOFK
our
Season

Massage *for* mommy

*A little pampering makes
pregnancy more bearable*

Easing the stress of pregnancy

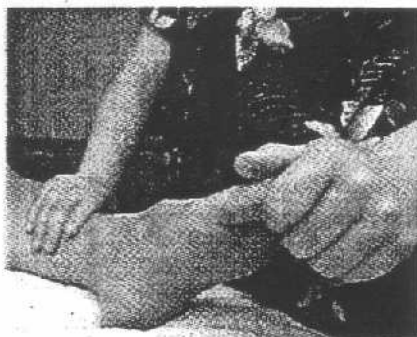
Gentle massage and therapeutic fragrances comfort moms to be

JUST hearing the word "massage" used to be enough to make Angela Laprete wince. "I had a really bad massage — a very deep shiatsu — about 10 years ago and remembered the pain I felt the next day and the recuperation period I had to go through," she recalls. "So I've always avoided massages when I know many people look forward to them as an almost weekly ritual."

As a production coordinator and producer in the television and film industry, the 36-year-old Laprete keeps a hectic schedule. Although she's passionate about her work and has rubbed shoulders with the likes of Ang Lee, Quentin Tarantino, John Ritter, Pat Morita and Janet Jackson, she admits "the hours are long; I sometimes work weeks at a time with no days off. I don't stand on my feet all day long, but mentally it's just as exhausting."

Laprete was an excellent candidate for stress-releasing massage, but she didn't go back for one until she got pregnant. As she moved into her third trimester (she's due Sept. 15), she began to notice lower back pain, leg cramps and swelling in her hands. So when a friend gifted her with a certificate for a treatment at Malama, An Aveda Lifestyle Salon Spa in Manoa, Laprete decided to give massage another try.

To her surprise, she found the specialty pregnancy massage to be "fabulous!" Her therapist discussed her concerns about the massage, she said. "She was extremely gentle and made sure the pressure was perfect. She focused on certain areas of my body that I felt needed the attention — my lower back, lower calf,



Feet carry a lot more weight during pregnancy and need attention.

Massaging a mother-to-be means understanding the changes pregnancy causes in the body — especially the pressure points that can induce labor. Here massage therapist Patricia Schooley massages Angela Laprete's stomach.

Spas: Massage addresses changes in the body during pregnancy

Continued From G7

ankles, hands and arms.

"The massage was soothing, very comfortable. ... That massage really changed my view on massages in general, and it elevated me to a new level of being able to relax and enjoy the silence. It was very spiritual, a wonderful awakening."

"Massage can be very beneficial," concurs Dr. Deborah Buccigrossi, an obstetrician and gynecologist who practices at Kaiser Permanente's Honolulu clinic. "It helps to relieve tension, relax muscles and alleviate stress."

Buccigrossi feels education is an important element of her patients' prenatal care, and she spends a lot of time with them, discussing all the changes their bodies will be going through prior to giving

birth. "Estrogen and progesterone levels increase during pregnancy," Buccigrossi explains.

"One of the things these elevated hormones can do is make your musculature more relaxed. Because your muscles and ligaments aren't as tight, you can injure yourself more easily, and more strain is put on your back. Your lower back may be more curved than it was, which alters your center of gravity during the late second and third trimesters. You retain fluids; your sodium balance is very dynamic and can easily shift during pregnancy. If you eat too much salt, you begin to retain fluids and swelling will occur. It's a myth that pregnancy only affects your uterus and your weight. It affects your entire body."

LiAnn Uyeda, owner of Aloha Lomilomi Natural Healing & Day

Spa, takes a hands-on approach to help mothers-to-be cope with these changes. She specializes in traditional Hawaiian lomilomi, a massage that's characterized by, in her words, "a gentle but powerful touch. The hands glide over the body; it's not deep, painful pressure."

Uyeda uses lomilomi for her pregnancy massage, which also employs hot towels to relax muscles, and warm booties and mittens to reduce swelling.

If a client is in her first trimester, Uyeda positions her on her stomach for the massage. A pillow is placed on the table to provide additional cushioning. Clients in their second or third trimester rest on their sides and back as Uyeda works her magic. They are given a pillow to hug, and two others go under their legs and head.

Helpful hints

Healthy & Hapai Week: Activities from Sept. 9 to 15 include workshops on pregnancy, breastfeeding and parenting; money-saving deals on a merchandise for pregnant women. Call Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition of Hawaii, 951-5805.

Mothers Care: Free coupons and Health Tips booklet includes discounts on products and services, including massages, books, infant and maternity clothing, nutritional supplements, car seats, breast pumps and nursing bras. Call 535-7988.

When they're lying face up, pillows elevate their upper body and knees so no pressure is put on their lower back.

"When massaging a pregnant woman, you need to be aware of the acupuncture points that may induce labor; you do not want to press on these points," Uyeda notes. "You also need to know that the coccyx, or tailbone, softens

Please see Spas, G9 AA

Spas: Aromas can improve moods

Continued From G7

during pregnancy for the opening of the birth canal, and you should not apply pressure on it either."

Before she starts, Uyeda always acknowledges the baby. "I talk as if he or she is present: 'Hi, baby, is it OK if I give you and Mommy a massage today?' The unborn child has a soul and we should listen to it. You may feel a response, you may sense a response; you use your intuition. The baby is usually content with the massage."

According to Uyeda, massages do the most good during the eighth and ninth months of pregnancy, when a woman's level of discomfort is at its peak. "We offer discounts to those in their second and third trimesters," she says. "Our sliding scale was designed for two reasons: first, as our gift to the baby, and second, so that the expectant mother can afford to come back more often."

"As a woman progresses into her third trimester, common complaints include lower back pain, neck pain, fatigue, and swollen hands and feet. That's when she needs a massage more than ever. Sharing unconditional love throughout the massage is the most important factor. Both the mother and unborn baby will feel the love

through your hands."

Maryann Broyles believes scents also possess healing powers. A massage therapist at the Four Seasons Resort Hualalai's Hualalai Sports Club & Spa on the Big Island, she blends her own Hana Naia line of aromatherapy oils from pikake, a white ginger, mango, rosemary, juniper, peppermint and dozens of other fragrant plants.

Broyles combines mandarin, geranium and lavender into a special "expecting" oil for mothers-to-be. "Mandarin is very calming, aids digestion and helps prevent stretch marks," she explains. "Geranium is uplifting, it balances the nervous system, alleviates tension and stimulates the psyche. Lavender is a sedative and an antiseptic, it heals tissues and is a remedy for insomnia."

It's not a wise idea, however, for women to raid their gardens in hopes of concocting their own aromatherapy recipes.

Cautions Broyles, "Aromatherapy is not only an art but a science, and it needs to be used very carefully by a person who has the proper experience and knowledge. Pure essential oils are concentrated and because their molecules are so small, they enter deep through the layers of the skin and go directly into the endocrine, nerv-

ous and digestive systems. Many essential oils can be toxic to the unborn baby. Even the 'safe' oils should be diluted. My Expecting blend is diluted."

Just as physicians are versed in the effects of the drugs they prescribe, so is Broyles knowledgeable about every item in her botanical apothecary.

"Lavender can soothe headaches — but, ironically, using too much of it can cause one," she points out. "Fennel helps milk production, while

sage can stop lactation. Myrrh can cause a miscarriage."

Used properly, aromatherapy offers a full spectrum of benefits to expectant mothers.

"Some of them came in (to the spa) depressed and tired, with upset stomachs, headaches and insomnia," Broyles says. "I've seen an aromatherapy foot bath, facial, body massage or just inhalation alone elevate them to a healthier state mentally, physically and emotionally."