What is it?
Some women complain of pain over the pubic bone or groin area during pregnancy. Climbing stairs, rolling in bed, getting in/out of a car and walking often aggravate this pain. This pain is often referred to as pubic symphysitis.

Why does this occur during pregnancy?
Certain pregnancy hormones in your body cause your ligaments to soften, which may make your joints more mobile. Your pubic symphysis joint is therefore more unstable, and this may cause inflammation and pain.

What can I do about it?
Modify your activity:
1) In general, try to keep your body as symmetrical as possible.
   For example:
   • Do not sit with your legs crossed or in the taylor position.
   • Avoid standing on one leg, e.g. when drying your feet or getting dressed - sit down instead.
   • Always stand with equal weight on both feet, with your feet not too far apart.
   • When you get in the car, sit down backwards on the seat, and then keep your knees and ankles together as you swivel around (do the opposite when getting out the car). Sitting on a plastic bag can make it easier to swivel around.
   • Avoid stairs as much as you can, take the lift where possible.
   • Avoid vacuuming, mopping and sweeping (lunging movements).
   • If you’re having a lot of pain, walk with small, equal steps.
   • Sleep with a pillow between your legs. When turning in bed, squeeze the pillow between your knees so your legs stay together.

2) Try to keep your knees relatively close together. For example:
   • Avoid sitting on the floor with crossed legs or your legs wide apart.
   • If you are finding sex on your back painful, try other positions, such as sidelying with a pillow between your knees.
   • Try practicing labour positions that you might find comfortable; like on all fours, sidelying or semi-reclined.

3) Avoid heavy lifting.
   • The weight you are lifting or carrying should be light enough that you can maintain your normal breathing i.e. you shouldn’t have to hold your breath.
• When lifting or carrying keep the object close to your body.

**Self-help techniques:**

1) **Ice.**
   • This can reduce pain and inflammation.
   • Use a packet of frozen peas or an ice pack.
   • Wrap in a wet dish cloth or towel.
   • Place directly on the pubic bone.
   • It may feel cold or numb, but should not burn. If this occurs, remove immediately.
   • Leave on for 10-15 minutes. You can re-apply 1-2 hourly as required.

2) **Modified exercise.**
   • Try to stay active but don’t push into pain.
   • If swimming, avoid breaststroke legs and some women find it useful to keep a float between their legs. Walking in the pool is sometimes more comfortable.
   • If you usually go for long walks you may find it helps to go for more frequent, shorter walks on flat surfaces.

3) **Other.**
   • Wear flat, supportive shoes.
   • Take your time, don’t rush!

If these strategies fail to manage your pain please contact the RHW Physiotherapy Department on 93826540. You may need to be fitted with a pelvic belt or shown some specific exercises.