

# BENEFITS OF MUSIC DURING PREGNANCY

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**Music has been a staple throughout human existence, but in recent years, the benefits during pregnancy have been discussed and researched in more depth.**

As an eight-month-pregnant music lover, it has been natural for me to play music and sing to my baby throughout the pregnancy, but it's also sparked an interest in me to find out what impact music might have over the nine months.

For many, it's an unconscious reaction to reach for the tunes. At times we listen to music that reflects our mood and at others, music that changes it.

So, if music can have such an impact on mood, then surely it would have an impact on pregnancy; a time filled with anxiety and expectation. According to The Healthline, "listening to music is an easy way to lift the mood or relieve stress and may help lower anxiety levels for expecting mothers.

"The same calming chemicals produced by singing and listening to music that lower anxiety for expecting mothers are thought to filter into the placenta and facilitate bonding between mother and baby. Music during early development in the womb can lead to a healthy and happy baby later in life."

At around 16-18 weeks of foetal development, it is thought that the baby hears its first sound. UNICEF states that music has a role in brain development before birth. It says: "Listening to music during pregnancy will not only have a soothing and uplifting effect on the pregnant woman, but also a positive influence on the unborn baby.

"By 24 weeks, an unborn baby can

[recognise their] mother's voice, her native language, word patterns and rhymes."

Many mothers and mothers-to-be, me included, have indeed experienced a range of reactions to music and sounds from their unborn baby, particularly in the second and third trimesters.

The Mozart effect is the theory that listening to any music piece by Mozart may increase a person's score on an IQ test. It has been suggested that the same can be said for unborn children – if you play Mozart they will be born with an IQ higher than the average.

However, Aptclub, concerning studies carried out across Europe, suggests that though babies in the womb have shown increased brain activity when exposed to music, studies have shown that there's little proof classical may make a child any brighter.

Regarding baby brain development, it says: "Exposing an unborn baby to music had a long-term effect on their brain. [The study] found that newborn babies could remember a version of 'Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star' played to them in the womb.

"Incredibly, other studies have shown that babies are born with the innate



ability to detect musical beats."

Healthline UK suggests that while music might soothe baby before birth, "Mum's voice may be all a baby needs to hear.

"Mum's voice is conducted through her own body. As mum talks, sings or reads aloud, the voice vibrates and amplifies inside of the body. It's an effective system, which doctors say is much more efficient than putting earphones or buds on the belly."

As we've been playing and singing a wide variety of music throughout the pregnancy, ranging from The Sound of Music soundtrack and Judas Priest to Gladys Knight and The Pips and Kendrick Lamar, I'll continue to enjoy my baby's dancing and hope that music further boosts our bond, soothes us both and sets the baby up for a strong start in life.