

Skin During Pregnancy

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— Skin Problems of Pregnancy

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Skin Problems of Pregnancy

A rosy glow is not all that happens to a pregnant woman's skin. She might also have to deal with bumps, blotches, masks, and rashes.
WebMD Feature

Reviewed by Cynthia Dennison Haines, MD

"You are positively glowing! You must be pregnant!" In real life, expectant moms rarely hear these words from kind strangers.

In fact, only a few very lucky women can list radiance as the only dermatological trait they experience during pregnancy. The vast majority of expectant moms have to put up with dark blotches on the skin, hair growth in unusual areas, thinning hair on their head, rashes, acne, stretch marks, brittle or splitting nails, and worsening of existing skin conditions.

"Pregnant women often do get the rosy glow, but they also get a lot of other things," says David Leffel, MD, professor of dermatology at Yale School of Medicine in New Haven, Conn. and author of *Total Skin*.

"When you are pregnant, your body produces an enormous amount of growth factors and has a higher blood flow going through it, so you do get a rosy glow because of increased blood flow to the skin, but that increased blood flow can also lead to broken blood vessels known as spider angiomas," he says.

The Nutrition Dos and Don'ts of Pregnancy

"The body goes through a lot of changes during pregnancy including hormonal fluctuations that can affect the skin, the hair, and the nails," agrees George Kroumpouzos, MD, PhD, a dermatologist at South Shore Medical Center in Norwell, Mass. and the co-author of "Dermatoses of Pregnancy," which appeared in the July 2001 issue of the *Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology*.

"If they are concerned about something on their skin, their hair, or nails during pregnancy, pregnant women should see a dermatologist and see if anything needs to be treated," Kroumpouzos says.

Here is the lowdown on what to expect when you are expecting, skin-wise:

Acne

If you thought your days of breaking out ended with your senior prom, think again, says Bruce E. Katz, MD, medical director of the Juva Skin and Laser Center and an associate clinical professor of dermatology at the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University, both in New York.

"The biggest problem pregnant women have is that their acne gets worse," says Katz, also director of the Cosmetic Surgery & Laser Clinic at Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center in New York. "They will break out on their face, chest, or back."

On the flip side, some women actually report their acne gets better with pregnancy, he tells WebMD. "Acne is a hormonally-driven condition, which is why some women take oral contraceptives to clear up their complexion, so it makes sense that hormone fluctuations during pregnancy would affect acne," he says.

In addition, oil glands respond to androgen, the male sex hormone that increases during pregnancy, too. This causes the oil glands to produce large quantities of oil called sebum, which clogs the opening of the oil gland and results in a "blackhead."

But do not panic, your skin will most likely clear up after pregnancy. "If breakouts are severe while pregnant, there are certain safe medicines we can use during pregnancy including topical antibiotics," he says.

"Cleansing daily with an over-the-counter cleanser that contains alpha-hydroxy acid can also keep breakouts to a minimum," he says.

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2 THOUGHTS ON "SKIN DURING PREGNANCY"**Dr. Berenholz**on **4 September, 2013 at 4:18 pm** said:

Great subject, I will definitely recommend this article to my patients, as a board certified Obstetrician/Gynecologist specializing in cosmetic surgery and have been treating patients here in Michigan for over 20 years, I believe that women should read about how to take care of their skin during and after pregnancy.

Thank you,
Dr. Joseph Berenholz
Laser Vaginal Rejuvenation Of Michigan

**Dr. Jack Ayoub**on **9 September, 2013 at 5:31 pm** said:

I like this article, I will share with my patients, thank you.

Dr. Jack Ayoub
<http://www.myvaobgyn.com>