

New Mom's Handbook Your first days home



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## SKIN PROBLEMS

## EXPERT ADVICE

Acne may get worse during pregnancy, especially if you suffer from acne rosacea, which causes persistent redness, bumps and pimples on the face, according to Debra Luftman, M.D., a dermatology professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, School of Medicine.

→ Use a gentle cleanser on your face. For extra-deep cleaning, try a clay or mud mask. If you still have blemish problems, effective, safe options include glycolic acid treatments. Prescription or store-bought varieties are fine to use during pregnancy, according to Jim Baral, M.D., a dermatologist at the American Dermatology Center in New York.

→ Avoid salicylic acid, benzoyl peroxide and all retinoids and retinols (vitamin A derivatives), such as Retin-A and Renova. Accutane and other oral acne treatments can cause fetal abnormalities and also must be avoided.

Dark facial splotches, also known as melasma or "the mask of pregnancy," may appear during your second and third trimesters.

→ Sun exposure exacerbates melasma, so stay out of the sun. If you must spend time outside, wear sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15.

→ Pigment-lightening treatments aren't safe while you're pregnant or nursing. Try sweeping a bronzer onto the lighter portions of your face to even out skin tone.

→ See your dermatologist if melasma persists after pregnancy. "Prescription creams with at least 4 percent hydroquinone can be effective, as can chemical peels and microdermabrasion," says Luftman.

Stretch marks can appear along the sides of your belly, breasts and thighs during pregnancy. "Stretch marks are the result of elastic fibers being torn," Luftman says. "Broken capillaries give them that purple hue."

→ Consistent application of moisturizers may be marginally helpful, but don't expect a miracle. "Genetics are the important determinant of how well your skin will stretch without tearing," Luftman explains.

→ Laser treatment after pregnancy (before the purple marks fade to white) can reduce the appearance of stretch marks. Three to four sessions, performed one month apart, generally are required. Though prices vary, expect to pay about \$300 to \$400 per session.

Factors such as dry skin, fluid loss and increased metabolism are all possible causes of that maddening pregnancy itchiness, explain dermatologists Baral and Luftman.

→ "Reduce the length of your showers as much as possible because water [especially hot] dries the skin," Baral says.

→ Very rich moisturizers and oatmeal baths can help, as can itch-relief creams and sprays.

→ Try an antihistamine, such as Benadryl, but consult your doctor before taking any medication.

You're bound to look a bit worn out at times. Growing a baby and taking care of yourself is hard work, not to mention just trying to keep up with all of your other daily responsibilities.

→ Put on some makeup; a little goes a long way. "Making your face look good is one thing you can do to give yourself a boost," says Beverly Hills, Calif., makeup artist (and mother of two) Bobbe Joy. Apply a slightly pearlescent, tinted moisturizer. Then add a quick swipe of sheer peach or rose-tinted powder on your eyelids, cheeks, forehead and chin. Finish with a coat of mascara and some peach or rose-toned lip gloss. You'll achieve that "you, only better" look in under three minutes.

BREAKOUTS

MELASMA

STRETCH MARKS

ITCHY BELLY

LOOKING TIRED