

- Pregnancy / Aesthetics

Should you expect acne when you're expecting?

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Ababy is not the only “bump” that expectant mothers have during pregnancy—for others, there’s acne too. So while some bask in the so-called “pregnancy glow,” others are bummed about breaking out (well, who wouldn’t be?). Acne during pregnancy is very common, with 50 percent of expectant mothers going through it, but why does it appear on some and not on others? Don’t worry mama, we’ll tell you why it happens and what to do to keep acne at bay while your baby is on the way.

carbed into the bloodstream and be harmful for the baby. Watch for octinoxate, octylalate, oxyne, avobenzone, benzophenone, aminobenzoic acid (PABA), and benzene. Instead, stick to mineral screens that can block the harmful UV rays (not absorb, as what chemical screens do), such as those that zinc oxide or titanium dioxide.

Perfumes and fragrances are, unfortunately, included in this list pregnant moms have to avoid. If contain endocrine disruptors asparfum, phthalates, or parabens may negatively affect the body's endocrine system (our hormones). When hormones are messed up, you can experience various health disorders, including possible birth defects.

Even if acne is harmless and does not pose any health risk, it can still affect self-confidence, mood, and social interactions. Having acne during pregnancy doesn't even make it any better, especially when you are experiencing changes in your body as well. If we are not acne-prone, don't fret as it most likely subsides after pregnancy. But if you've dealt with acne before, it may not subside soon enough or still persist postpartum. For those who currently have acne and are concerned, it, talk to both your OB-Gyn and dermatologist for the safest pregnancy treatments that can ease those zits. Keep your skin clean at all times, always make sure that your soap is non-comedogenic, and pick on pimples if you already have them. Also, eat as healthy as you can and always get enough sleep and hydration. At home, make sure to replace your covers and towels. Lastly, keep a positive mindset for you and your baby. Even if you have acne, remember that it's a headache to keep you from enjoying this special time in your life.



Acne usually appears around the first or second trimester and may worsen at the third. It is triggered by sudden hormonal changes in the body—a spike in androgen levels (progesterone in particular) that triggers more oil production, leading to clogged pores and eventually acne. But not everyone who gets acne is caused by this spike. Sometimes, the combination of stress and lack of sleep can contribute to these nasty breakouts too. And if you think your go-to pimple cream will do the trick to banish them, wait a minute because pregnancy is a sensitive time when the baby’s development is crucial, there are a lot of products that are prohibited from topical application or ingestion, and this includes skin care cosmetics.

For acne medication and skin care, pregnant women should avoid the following

1. Retinoids are vitamin A derivatives that can effectively treat acne by speeding up cell turnover, unclogging pores, and preventing future break outs. Examples of retinoids are Adapalene, Retinol, Retinoic acid, Retinal, Retinyl linoleate, Retinyl palmitate, Retinaldehyde, Tretinoin, and Tazarotene. Oral Isotretinoin, a form of vitamin A as well, however, has been proven to cause birth defects when taken during pregnancy. So as a safety precaution, all types of retinoids should be avoided, whether as a topical or oral treatment.

2. Salicylic acid or beta hydroxy acid (BHA) is also an effective acne solution as it can penetrate deep into pores and target acne and inflammation. Small amounts applied topically are typically safe for pregnant women. But when high amounts are ingested (it is also found in aspirin), it can cause pregnancy complications. Therefore, doctors advise to stay away from this ingredient as well.

3. Oral tetracyclines is an antibiotic that can treat various infections, including the growth of bacteria-causing acne. This is also a no-no for pregnant women, according to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, as it can affect the unborn baby's bones and teeth.

For make-up and cosmeceuticals:

4. Organic may sound safe and natural, but not always, especially for pregnant women. Watch out for soy-containing products as they contain isoflavones that can imitate the hormone estrogen and aggravate skin pigmentations such as chloasma. Aside from soy, also watch out for ingredients such as lecithin, phosphatidylcholine, and textured vegetable protein.

5. Hydroquinone, a popular whitening agent, is also not safe for expectant moms. While there are insufficient studies to support this, as much as 35 to 45 percent can be absorbed by the body when applied; hence, it is better to avoid this ingredient.

6. Sunscreen, a skin care must, is something pregnant moms should watch out for. While not all sunscreens are bad to use during pregnancy, watch out for chemical sunscreens that can be absorbed into the bloodstream and may be harmful for the baby. Watch out for octinoxate, octisalate, oxybenzone, avobenzone, benzophenone, para-aminobenzoic acid (PABA), and dioxybenzone. Instead, stick to mineral sunscreens that can block the harmful rays (not absorb, as what chemical sunscreens do), such as those that contain zinc oxide or titanium dioxide.

7. Perfumes and fragrances are, unfortunately, included in this list that pregnant moms have to avoid. These contain endocrine disruptors such as parfum, phthalates, or parabens that may negatively affect the body's endocrine system (our hormones). And when hormones are messed up, it may cause various health disorders, which include possible birth defects.

Even if acne is harmless and does not pose any health risk, it can still affect one's self-confidence, mood, and social interactions. Having acne during pregnancy doesn't even make it any better, especially when you are experiencing other changes in your body as well. If you are not acne-prone, don't fret as it will most likely subside after pregnancy. But if you've dealt with acne before, it may not subside soon enough or may still persist post partum.

For those who currently have acne and concerned about it, talk to both your OB-Gyn and your dermatologist for the safest products or treatments that can ease those breakouts. Keep your skin clean at all times, always make sure that your make-up is non-comedogenic, and don't prick on pimples if you already have them. Also, eat as healthy as you can and always get enough sleep and rest. At home, make sure to replace pillow covers and towels. Lastly, try to keep a positive mindset for you and your baby. Even if you have acne, remember that it shouldn't keep you from enjoying this special period in your life.

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