

# Beauty is more

## Beauty and wellbeing for mums

As the saying goes, “There’s nothing more beautiful than a pregnant woman”, but how true is it?

Although I was happy being pregnant, I didn’t feel at my best. Looking back at some photos, I can see spots, discoloured hair (I was scared the chemicals in hair dyes would affect my baby) and some forced grins (you wouldn’t feel like smiling if you suffered daily nausea, followed by crippling back ache when your bump gets heavier).

Maybe it was just my basic approach to wellbeing and beauty - I remember meeting glamorous pregnant women with not a hair out of place.

There were bonuses, though, my body

hair didn’t regrow after I shaved it, my fingernails grew faster and my hair had more volume than ever (you lose less



hair in pregnancy). And, yes, despite the odd spot, my skin looked brighter (an increase in blood volume is responsible for this).

My partner was delighted with my cleavage (I went up from an average

32C to a 40C).

If I had to do it again, I’d definitely show off my good bits with fashionable maternity wear and pamper myself a bit more: a pedicure would be bliss for weary feet.

### PRETTY & PREGNANT

#### ◆ Beautiful bump:

if you’re concerned about stretch marks, rub a dedicated cream or oil on your tummy, your baby will get a nice massage, too. Some women swear by olive oil, cocoa butter, potions with vitamin E, sweet almond oil... the choice is yours. Rub creams and oils over your tummy even after the birth.

◆ **Complexion perfection:** despite your skin getting

# than skin deep

## before and after childbirth



brighter, hormonal changes may lead to spots, oversensitivity or dryness. Don't use harsh cleansers as they will strip your skin's protective oils. Creams with vitamin E should help, but do read the packaging carefully (steer clear of products with vitamin A, usually called retinol). If you're having a facial, tell the beauty therapist you're pregnant as some products are not suitable. Stacy Denney, author of *Spa Mama*, offers a tempting recipe for a chocolate facial.

In a bowl, combine 50g of cocoa powder, 3 tablespoons of heavy cream, 2 teaspoons of cottage cheese, 3 teaspoons of avocado, 175g of honey and 3 teaspoons of

oatmeal powder in a bowl. Smooth on your face. Relax for 10 minutes, then



rinse the mask off with warm water.

◆ **For your eyes only:** To soothe puffy, red eyes, place two chilled tea bags on your eyelids and relax for a few minutes. Or you could use two thin slices of chilled cucumber. Read the

packaging of eye creams carefully - anti-ageing products can irritate your skin.

◆ **Tone those muscles:** Do some gentle exercise, even when you are very big (I believe my bouncing antics on the exercise ball made me give birth on my due date; going up and down the stairs is also very effective). Avoid high-impact aerobics and contact sports. Whatever you do, just don't

overstretch as your ligaments and joints soften in pregnancy and you risk straining them. Yoga and Pilates are perfect.

**YUMMY MUMMY**  
Nobody expects you to look radiant straight after having a baby, so put ▶

your feet up for the first week and read on!

◆ **Luscious locks:**

hair loss is normal

after giving birth (those hormones, again!). It's temporary (up to the first six to nine months), so

don't worry too much. If you feel your hair has lost volume, invest in a volumiser spray or mousse. Regular washes encourage new hair growth. Don't use hairdryers or tongs too often - they leave your hair dry and brittle. It's also best to wait until your hair is healthy again before dyeing it.

◆ **Soft skin:** after the birth, hormonal changes cause your skin to become dry and less supple. It is temporary, but it's

important to look after it. First of all, drink plenty of water. Apply a good moisturiser day and night.

◆ **Get into shape:** Push that pram out for walks in the park, to the shops, etc. Keep a good pace and you will see the pounds fall off you. Swimming is good, but whatever you choose, don't overdo it as your body needs time to totally recuperate (it'll take from six months to a year to recover). If you don't have the motivation to

exercise, meet up with other mums or join a class. Breastfeeding burns lots of calories (that's why celeb mums swear by it!). Eat a healthy diet whenever possible - I know it's hard with a newborn, but have healthy snacks handy and cut down on fatty foods.

◆ **Feel like a star and help the NCT**  
The NCT catalogue offers products specially selected to help you go through pregnancy and birth. Profits are used to fund the charity. **We love:** Mama Mio Congratulations Kit, £45 (cat. No. 4615; case of pampering products). Mama Mio Tummy Rub Stretch Mark Cream, £23 (cat. No. 4620C). K Widgey Nursing Pillow, £24.95 (cat. No. 4412). Getting Back DVD, £17.99 (cat. No. 4513D; workouts to regain your shape after birth). Call 08458 100100 or visit [www.nctshop.co.uk](http://www.nctshop.co.uk).

**Mum's the word**  
"I enjoyed the bigger bust I was lucky enough to keep even after the pregnancy and I also enjoyed not worrying about when my period would be due. The freedom!" *Ellen*  
"Pregnancy sorted out my acne! I'd had very bad acne since I was a child. When I became pregnant the spots got worse in the first trimester, then gradually started to fade away. My skin has stayed clear even after the birth!" *Mary*

**Be beautiful, be safe - beauty advice for pregnant women**  
◆ **Creams:** anti-ageing creams might irritate your skin. Check with your GP before using any skincare products containing retinoids (vitamin A) or acne medications.  
◆ **Fake tan:** it's safe, but as your skin is more sensitive, do a patch test to avoid an unsightly reaction.  
◆ **Hair dyes:** go for a natural, vegetal dye (without ammonia and hydrogen peroxide). Natural henna is also a safe option.  
◆ **Oils:** Some aromatherapy oils are not suitable. Read the labels carefully.

