

beauty and the BUMP

We're debunking the myths of prenatal beauty maintenance. (You might be surprised by what's OK!)

MYTH #1 YOU CAN'T USE ACNE PRODUCTS

If you're prone to breakouts – or experiencing them for the first time thanks to those pregnancy hormones – there are some medicated products that are safe for moms-to-be. You can zap zits with over-the-counter washes and creams as long as they contain concentrations of five percent or less of benzoyl peroxide, or two percent or less of salicylic acid, says Winnipeg dermatologist Victoria Taraska. If you're already taking an oral acne medication, talk to your doctor about discontinuing it. Accutane, tetracycline and retinoid products have been shown to cross the placenta, causing heart defects or impaired skeletal growth in babies.

Some moms-to-be also experience heightened sensitivity. "Let your skin give you some clues as to whether you need to change your routine," says Taraska. "Back off on scrubs and peels if your skin is pink or irritated, for example." You may also want to swap your regular products for ones that are free of potentially harmful chemicals like parabens (types of preservatives), phthalates (used for texture) and sulfates (foaming agents used in shampoos and cleansers). There are some concerns over the effects of these ingredients on the hormonal and physical development of growing babies, though the research remains inconclusive.

MYTH #2 FRAGRANCES ARE A NO-NO

Another beauty red flag may come in the form of perfumes and scented products. "Some women will have trouble with strong fragrances, especially during the first trimester," says Taraska. She suggests shelving your perfume and switching to unscented creams and shampoos if you find that your regular products are bothering you.

For fragrance lovers who can't imagine going out the door without a spritz of something, a lighter scent or formulation, like a body mist instead of an eau de parfum, may be in order. You can also opt for more natural perfumes that are free of the above-mentioned chemicals or an essential-oil based scent.

MYTH #3 YOU CAN'T GET REGULAR PEDIS

So far, the science says that nail polish doesn't pose a risk to your baby. And according to Lecanne Colley, Revlon nail expert and owner of Tips Nail Bar in Toronto, most major polish brands are now free of chemicals like formaldehyde and toluene. But, you can take safety a step further by opting for a formulation that contains natural colourants and organic ingredients.

"Regular pedicures are good for swollen feet and ankles, and they feel really great – especially when you get to the stage where it's difficult to even reach your feet," says Colley.

MYTH #4 YOU MUST CANCEL YOUR HAIR-COLOURING APPOINTMENT

The small amount of chemicals absorbed through the scalp during processing is considered safe according to Motherisk, a research and education program at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. But, to err on the side of caution, you may want to postpone your appointment until week 13 or later, once you've gotten through baby's critical first three months of development. —KAREN ROBOCK

For more on keeping you and your baby in fighting form, check out *Healthy Pregnancy*, a guide from the editors of Today's Parent, on newsstands and at todaysparent.com/healthy-pregnancy

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