



# Physical Changes

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**PREGNANCY, MOTHERHOOD MALAYSIA**

**ARTICLE**

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Many changes take place in a woman's body during pregnancy, and they differ from person to person. This article takes a look at the changes likely to happen to the skin, hair, nails, teeth and gums.

*The developing fetus does not take calcium from your teeth!*

## Skin

There are many changes that take place in the skin during pregnancy, and they differ a lot from woman to woman.

Some of the extra blood flowing through your body goes to your skin. Your skin becomes warmer and sweats more. It may darken because of the increased blood supply.

Almost all women experience some darkening of the skin. The amount of darkening depends on your complexion. Blondes, redheads, and brunettes with pale skin may notice few changes. Women with olive or darker skin may find that their complexion becomes several shades deeper.

The navel becomes darker, too, and flattens out during pregnancy. A line about the width of your thumbnail may appear down the middle of the stomach. It should begin to fade soon after delivery and should be completely gone within several months.

Much of the skin returns to its usual colour after delivery, but the areas around the nipples, the genital area, and the stomach may remain dark.

If you already have dark marks on your body—birthmarks, moles, freckles, or recent scars—they may become darker during pregnancy, especially after exposure to sun. You may also get some oddly shaped brown splotches that are made more obvious by sunlight. They, too, should fade and disappear after delivery.

Stretch marks will appear on the breasts, stomach, thighs, and buttocks of most women. These marks will be pink during pregnancy, but after delivery they become smaller and rather silvery. Women with darker complexions may find that the stretch marks are more noticeable because of the contrast in colour.

## **Hair and nails**

The changes in your hair and nails—which are made of the same material—vary from woman to woman. Curly hair may straighten, straight hair may curl, and the changes may remain after delivery. Most women's hair grows thicker during pregnancy because the usual amount of hair "fallout" doesn't occur. After delivery, much of the hair that didn't fall out during pregnancy falls out, leaving many women worried. Be assured that your hair will grow again.

Your nails may become dry and split during pregnancy, but they will return to normal after delivery. Women who have stronger, shinier nails during pregnancy may have more brittle nails after delivery.

## **Teeth and gums**

The developing fetus does not take calcium from your teeth! But some of the hormones of pregnancy can make your gums soft and prone to infection.

Take very good care of your teeth and gums during your pregnancy. Brush your teeth after every meal, and especially after eating sweet or sticky foods. See your dentist as soon as you know you are pregnant to ask if you need any special care. Your dentist will know that when you are pregnant you should avoid x-rays. Eat a diet rich in vitamins and calcium. Be sure to include dairy products.

Disclaimer: This content is shared for informational purposes only and not intended to be a substitute for professional/medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. We recommended that you always seek the

advice of your healthcare professional for any questions you may have regarding a medical condition/specific situation.

### References:

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