

# Pregnancy Precautions

Essential knowledge when caring for the mother-to-be

by Phyllis Hanlon

**B**ubbling with excitement, your ten o'clock appointment announces her just-confirmed pregnancy. While you share in her joy, you also hope to maintain or even strengthen your relationship with her at a time many ordinary skin treatments aren't suitable.

While there are some don'ts in caring for a pregnant client, there are many things you can do to help mom feel relaxed and pretty while she rides the hormonal roller coaster.

## Start With the Basics

Pregnant women have a very sensitive sense of smell. Even a pleasant scent can cause discomfort, headache, or nausea. Go easy on the fragrance sprays, potpourri, incense, and open product containers in your workplace.

As her pregnancy advances to the second and third trimesters, your client may find certain physical positions challenging. After the first trimester, use a semireclined position. Use a pregnancy wedge (a special pillow) or as many as four regular pillows to support mother's back and have her knees bolstered also. This way the growing baby is not resting on the abdominal aorta and inferior vena cava, which may cause fluid to accumulate in the lower extremities.

Diane Davies, a licensed cosmetologist and esthetician from Woodstock, Connecticut, offers her pregnant clients water immediately after a facial to flush metabolic wastes freed from tissue out of the system. Another tip for a client in the later stages of pregnancy is to limit treatments to thirty minutes or less as she copes with frequent trips to the restroom.

## Thorough is Better

Do a thorough health intake and ask your client to update you on any medical, skin, or allergy changes at each visit, including through the breastfeeding period. Your expertise on products and treatments during pregnancy is an added customer service,

although it's certainly wise to request that your client have her physician approve any treatments that seem questionable.

## Facials: Banishing Blahs

Facials can help a pregnant woman feel better about her changing physical appearance and foster a positive attitude. Davies says there is no one-size-fits-all facial for this client, but the usual rules about skin typing still hold.

Anifa Cazimoski, licensed esthetician at Faces Plus in Wayne, New Jersey, recommends a facial every six to eight weeks during pregnancy to rebalance and moisturize the skin. For home care, she advises a simple routine of cleansing, toning, and gentle exfoliation.

## Erupting Skin

During the first trimester, a woman's body produces more androgenic hormones—those with male-type properties—according to Barbara Dehn, RN, MS, NP, of Women Physicians OB/GYN Medical Group in Mountain View, California. "This could mean an increase in acne on the face, chest, and back, which may correlate with an adolescent history. Or it may be a brand-new onset," she says.

As pregnancy progresses, oil production usually increases, although sometimes dryness may occur along with scaling and itching. In severe cases, an itchy rash may develop that necessitates intervention by a dermatologist.

## Product Perils

The developing fetus is susceptible to adverse effects from harsh chemicals, particularly in the first trimester, according to Julia Tatum Hunter, MD, of Beverly Hills, California. "Cosmetics, makeup, and other skin care creams and lotions contain ingredients that can be transdermally absorbed," she says. "They are deposited in fat and absorbed into the bloodstream, circulating to the fetus."