

STRETCH MARK STRONG!

5

Essential Tips
for Minimizing
Stretch Marks
During Pregnancy

Dr. Jen
KNOWS SKIN

Welcome

Hello Beautiful! Welcome to your holistic guide for managing stretch marks during pregnancy.

I'm glad you're here, and I'm excited to share these tips with you. My holistic approach focuses on skin health and overall wellness. I won't promise you a stretch mark free pregnancy, but I can promise that the holistic tips in this guide will fortify your skin to help minimize the formation of stretch marks, improve existing ones and enhance your skin's ability to adapt to the many changes of pregnancy.

Before you begin, take a moment to check in with how you're feeling. Research shows that a positive attitude is one of the fastest ways to support skin health and overall wellbeing. Above all, celebrate your changing body and Black Girl Magic throughout this journey, and give yourself grace on the tough days. Wishing you a happy, healthy and radiant pregnancy!

- Dr. Jen

This guide is for EDUCATIONAL purposes only and does not constitute medical advice. Speak with your healthcare provider BEFORE MAKING any CHANGES During pregnancy.



THE SCIENCE

What are stretch marks?

Striae Gravidarum, known as stretch marks, typically appear as red, brown or purple lines or streaks that get lighter over time.

Stretch marks most often appear on areas prone to rapid growth or change including the abdomen, breasts, thighs, hips, butt and lower back.



How do stretch marks form?

Stretch marks form when the skin rapidly stretches during pregnancy or contracts postpartum causing weak collagen and elastin fibers to break and form scars beneath the skin's surface.

Collagen and elastin are the two main proteins in skin. Collagen, the primary structural protein, gives the skin strength and firmness by serving as a support framework that keeps the skin tight and resilient.

Elastin provides elasticity, enabling the skin to stretch and return to its original shape.

Stretch marks develop more rapidly when collagen and elastin fibers are weak or the skin barrier, the skin's protective outer layer, is compromised.

If a building has a weak structure, it's more prone to collapsing. The same principle applies to the skin: the stronger your skin's barrier and structure, the less likely you are to develop stretch marks.

Black skin has more collagen making the skin more resistant to stretch marks. However, this natural resistance is not enough, on its own, to keep stretch marks from forming.

Pregnancy & Postpartum Stretch Mark Risk Factors

Hormonal fluctuations

Compromised skin barrier (signs include dryness, irritation, redness, flaky skin)

Nutritional deficiencies

Dehydration

Sleep deprivation

Chronic stress

Rapid weight gain

Rapid weight loss

Genetics

Prioritize Body Care

Purify. Nourish. Protect.

Maintaining a consistent body care routine is key for skin resilience, elasticity and barrier function. These tips promote skin health and help minimize stretch marks:

Cleanse

Regular showers/baths wash away sweat, dirt, and environmental pollutants that can clog pores or irritate skin, allowing the skin to better absorb moisture.

- Use mild soap/body wash and keep your water temperature warm. Hot baths and showers can strip essential moisture and disrupt the skin barrier. Plus, they are not recommended during pregnancy.



Holistic Tip:

Water is grounding and cleansing. A shower can help wash away emotional and physical tension, leaving a renewed sense of calm which can reduce stress.

Exfoliate

Use a gentle scrub 1-2 times per week to promote cell turnover and enhance the absorption of moisturizers. Opt for scrubs with simple ingredients such as sugar, coconut oil and honey.



Holistic Tip:

Exfoliation promotes cell turnover, boosts circulation, improves texture, enhances product absorption and sloughs away stagnant energy that no longer serves you helping to raise your vibration.



Moisturize

Moisturize daily and more frequently as needed. Choose natural oils and butters like shea butter, cocoa butter, coconut oil, sweet almond oil and rosehip oil

- For the highest quality and to minimize exposure to harmful pesticides, choose organic and cold-pressed options whenever possible.
- Apply oils and butters while the skin is still damp for maximum absorption.



Holistic Tip:

Gently massage oils and butters into the skin to stimulate circulation, support skin elasticity and relax the body.

Avoid Irritants

Steer clear of products (body care and laundry care) containing synthetic fragrance, petrolatum, SLS, propylene glycol and phthalates, as these ingredients can irritate the skin and pose unknown risk to you and your baby.

Patch Test

Moisturize daily and more frequently as needed. Choose natural oils and butters like shea butter, cocoa butter, coconut oil, sweet almond oil and rosehip oil.

2

Eat with Intention

Fuel. Flourish. Glow.



Nutrition plays a crucial role in skin health during pregnancy, providing vital nutrients to support collagen production, skin elasticity, hydration and repair.

Key Skin Nutrients

Water

Benefits: skin hydration, nourishes skin cells, supports toxin removal

Recommendation: aim for at least 8-10 glasses of water daily

Vitamin E

Benefits: powerful antioxidant

Recommendation: avocados, almonds, spinach, sunflower seeds

Vitamin A

Benefits: promotes skin cell production and repair

Recommendation: carrots, sweet potatoes, spinach, kale, mango

Omega-3 Fatty Acids

Benefits: moisturizes, uv protection, reduces inflammation, promotes wound healing

Recommendation: Flaxseeds, chia seeds, hemp seeds, walnuts, soybeans

Zinc

Benefits: uv protection, wound healing, hormone regulation, immune support

Recommendation: chickpeas, lentils, Pumpkin seeds, quinoa, nuts

Biotin (Vitamin B7)

Benefits: supports skin hydration and elasticity, Strengthens the skin barrier, Balances oil production

Recommendation: avocados, mushrooms, nuts, seeds, sweet potatoes

Vitamin C

Benefits: antioxidant, Supports collagen production, immune support

Recommendation: red bell peppers, kiwi, Oranges, strawberries, broccoli, leafy greens (spinach, kale)

Protein

Benefits: needed for collagen and elastin production, Essential for skin repair

Recommendation: lentils, chickpeas, quinoa, tofu, tempeh, edamame, nuts, seeds

Selenium

Benefits: supports skin elasticity, wound healing, Protects against skin damage

Recommendation: brazil nuts, brown rice, lentils

Cheat Code:

Smoothies, salads, bowls, and stir-fry are great ways to get multiple nutrients in one meal.



3

Protect Your Rest

Recharge. Repair. Replenish.



Get your beauty sleep to fortify your body and skin before the baby arrives. Your skin repairs itself while you sleep. Quality sleep supports overall skin health, promotes collagen and elastin production and reduces inflammation.

Quality Sleep Tips:

- establish a bedtime routine including body care
- create a comfortable environment
- use supportive pillows and keep the room cool
- limit screen time before bed, blue light can disrupt sleep patterns
- practice relaxation techniques before bed

- gentle stretching, journaling, meditation or reading are great options
- aim for at least 7 hours of sleep each night



Holistic Tip:

Water is grounding and cleansing. A shower helps wash away emotional and physical tension, leaving a renewed sense of calm and balance.

4

Minimize Stress

Relax. Relate. Release.



Stress increases the primary stress hormone cortisol. Cortisol weakens the skin by degrading collagen, increasing inflammation, slowing circulation and making the skin more prone to dryness. To help keep your skin healthy and resilient, find ways to reduce stress that bring you joy.

Try these proven stress busters:

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|---------------|-------------------------|
| Meditation | Singing |
| Breath work | Spending time in nature |
| Dancing | Prenatal Massage |
| Humming | Journaling |
| Sound Healing | Grounding |
| Coloring | Laughing |



Holistic Tip:

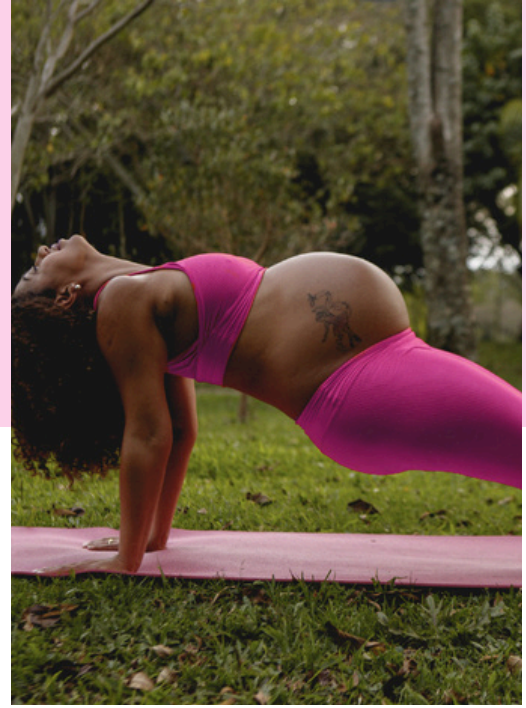
Use your daily skincare routine as a time to pause, breath and affirm yourself to reduce stress and boost confidence.

A 2020 study found that a daily skincare routine improves feelings of empowerment, happiness, self-esteem and overall well-being in new moms.

5

Get Active

Move. Energize. Flow.



Safe, regular exercise during pregnancy balances hormones, boosts collagen, improves skin elasticity, and enhances blood flow helping the skin stay resilient.

Pregnancy safe ways to stay active:

Hula Hooping

Walking

Swimming

Prenatal yoga

Strength Training

Dance Classes

Biking



Holistic Tip:

Movement helps release stagnant energy stored within the body, clearing out energetic blockages. This promotes a sense of mental and emotional clarity, often leading to feelings of lightness and openness.

***Don't forget your pelvic floor exercises. They help support core stability, reduce back pain and strengthen muscles in preparation for labor. Postpartum, they help prevent urine leakage and aid in faster recovery.





I'm excited that you've taken the first step in your skin wellness journey!

Your journey matters! As a fellow Black woman who's walked this path, I know the uncertainty and questions that come with pregnancy and postpartum skincare and self-care. Your skin story is unique, and I'd love to continue supporting you throughout your pregnancy.

Skin health is a vital part of your maternal wellness journey. So, let's make this a beginning not a goodbye.

New Programs Launching in 2025

We're excited to announce our new programs created for Black moms-to-be!

- ★ The Glow Circle, a monthly membership - [learn more](#)
- ★ Radiant Mama Collective, a group coaching program - [learn more](#)

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For more skin wellness wisdom and holistic tips, follow me:



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