

Breast Changes During Pregnancy

Care and Concerns



Breast Changes

Throughout the course of your pregnancy, you will notice some changes in your breasts. Even though there are many different shape and sizes to breasts, there are some universal changes that occur. Both breasts will become larger and may tingle or feel tender. You might notice enlarged nodules within your breast tissue, and enlarged, erect nipples.

You Might Notice:

- A darkened areola
- Darker veins on your breasts
- Stretch marks due to growth
- Colostrum (early milk) leaking from your nipples or crusted to your nipples
- Darkened skin color around the areola



Breast Care

- Remove your bra once you are home to allow for lymph circulation
- Avoid underwires
- Avoid using soap directly on the areola and nipple – your body produces an oil to clean and soften your breast
- Avoid “toughening” your nipples – this could cause damage
- Wipe away crusted colostrum with a warm, wet cloth

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Breast Feeding Prep

There are a few things that you can do to prepare yourself for breast feeding:

1. Contact a local breastfeeding group and stop by to meet them. You may need their support later!
2. Meet with a lactation support counselor to see if you have any unique needs to prepare for, or to prepare for returning to work.
3. Buy a breastpump or file for one with your insurance company.
4. Take a class on breastfeeding.
5. Borrow a breastfeeding book from your friends, family, or midwife.
6. Visit some helpful sites:



- a. <http://www.breastfeedinginc.ca/>
 - b. <http://kellymom.com/>
 - c. <http://www.llusa.org/>
7. Aim for a natural birth. It will improve your chance for success.
 8. Notify your midwife of any previous breast surgeries.
 9. Explore your own thoughts and feelings about the use and functions of your breasts as a new mother.

Reference:

Davis, E. (2012). *Heart and hands: A midwife's guide to pregnancy and birth*. Berkeley: Ten Speed Press.

Frye, A. (2013). *Holistic midwifery: A comprehensive textbook for midwives in homebirth practice, Volume 1 care during pregnancy*. Portland: Labrys Press

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Flat or Inverted Nipples

Flat or inverted nipples are a normal nipple variation. There are several ways that you can prepare your nipples for breast feeding:

- Wear breast shells 1-2 hours per day
- Use a “nipple puller”, such as the one sold by Lansinoh.
- Gently pull the nipple out and roll it between your finger tips to make it erect a few times each day
- Do NOT pump your breasts with a breast pump during pregnancy – that could cause contractions