



Supporting the birth that is right for you!

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## Breast Changes to Expect During Pregnancy and Lactation

*By Rebecca Pugh*

- You may feel burning or tingling and note enlargement as early as four weeks of pregnancy.
- Enlargement happens from the outer border of the breast to the inner breast and continues throughout pregnancy. The growth is not always even.
- The breasts may develop stretch marks, no matter what moisturizer you use, depending on your genetic disposition to them. New stretch marks look bluish, purple and older ones take on a silvery appearance.
- Your nipples may darken and become very sensitive. Your partner may need to know this.
- If you are nursing while pregnant your milk production may decrease due to the demands of pregnancy. To keep up, make sure you are getting an additional 500-600 calories per day of nutrient rich food, in addition to your pregnancy diet.
- If one or both breasts develop an infection you could notice red streaking on the breast, a hot sensation, puss coming from the nipple, or severe engorgement. Keep breastfeeding and call your midwife.
- If you develop a clogged milk duct a tender lump may appear on your breast, again, call your midwife.
- Your baby may not be latching on correctly if you are developing cracked, bleeding, or raw nipples. Seek advise from the La Leche League or your midwife.
- The size of your breasts has nothing to do with how much milk you can produce or how well you will breastfeed. Babies don't care about size...why should you?

### Care of the Breasts During Pregnancy and Lactation

- Spend an equal amount of time with a bra on as without. Bras interfere with normal superior lymph gland drainage and encourage build-up of toxins in milk. Gently massage the breasts after removing your bra. Try bras that are not constricting of the rib cage and do not have an underwire. You may need to buy several different bras during pregnancy to accommodate your growth. Bras are important for support and comfort, so make sure you buy the best for you.
- The best thing for sore nipples is correct positioning of the baby on the breast. In the mean time use only 100% lanolin as a soothing salve for irritated nipples.
- Cold cabbage leaves or compresses help ease the heat and swelling of engorgement. So does feeding often.
- Try warm compresses or showers before feeding to ease the intensity of engorgement.