

Title: Stretch Marks in Pregnancy

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Abstract: Stretch marks during pregnancy are not uncommon and are often emotionally distressing. To date there are no good prevention strategies but there are treatment options for existing stretch marks.

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Is there treatment for existing stretch marks?

- Laser treatment – some immediate improvement and appearance of stretch marks may continue to improve for up to 6 months after treatment
- 20% glycolic acid with 0.05% tretinoin emollient cream (Renova)
- These treatments are for existing stretch marks and cannot be performed until after delivery



STRETCH MARKS DURING PREGNANCY

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What are stretch marks?

- Stretch marks (striae) are straight or “lightening bolt” shaped lines, which are most often found on the abdomen, breasts, hips, and thighs
- They begin as reddish to purple colored lesions and over time they lose color and become light and shiny with fine wrinkles along their edges
- They can itch or burn and their appearance often causes emotional distress
- The history of stretch marks date back to the ancient Egyptians who described several ways to treat them



What causes stretch marks?

- The exact cause is still unknown, but 50% to 90% of pregnant women will get them
- Studies suggest that the development of stretch marks involve the physical stretching of the skin and hormonal changes
- Younger age of the mother and more weight gained during pregnancy are linked to the development of stretch marks
- A heavier baby, number of weeks pregnant at delivery, and a family history of stretch marks are linked to moderate/severe stretch marks

Can I prevent stretch marks?

- There are no proven therapies to prevent stretch marks
- Lotions containing cocoa butter **do not** reduce stretch marks when compared to lotion containing a placebo
- There may be some benefit to massaging your breasts and belly with **any** lotion



