

A collection of various beauty products including a perfume bottle, a brush, a jar of cream, a tube of lipstick, and a jar of powder, all arranged on a white marble surface with grey veining.

# The Pregnancy Beauty Safety List

Want to dye your hair while pregnant? Wondering if you should skip your laser treatment appointment? Find out what's safe and what's not in the beauty camp during your 40 weeks.

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**T**he list of dos and don'ts for pregnant mums is abundant, from what you can and cannot eat to what exercises are safe to when you should not travel. Here's one more category you should add: all things beauty!

Whether you are a beauty lover with elaborate skin care routines, someone who is indifferent about anything beauty-related, or you fall somewhere in between, it is essential for you to find out what you can and cannot do when it comes to beauty. *What skin care ingredients should you avoid? Is it okay to go for facials? What about whitening your teeth?*

Read on to find out the answers to these questions and more.

### Ingredient No-Nos

Many skin care products contain ingredients that may be harmful to the foetus. According to Dr Liew Hui Min, specialist in dermatology and consultant at Raffles Skin & Aesthetics, ingredients pregnant women should avoid are retinoids and bleaching agents such as hydroquinone.

Retinoids may come in either oral or topical forms. Oral retinoids such as Accutane have been found to cause birth defects, while topical retinoids like tretinoin may harm the foetus.

**Hydroquinone is a popular, albeit controversial, ingredient in skin lightening products. Since it can be absorbed by the bloodstream in higher concentrations, hydroquinone may pose significant harm to the foetus.**

Therefore, be sure to check the ingredients of your existing skin care products as well as any product you are planning to purchase for these ingredients. "If in doubt, avoid using products that do not label their ingredients. Always ask your doctors who prescribe them to you," advises Dr Liew.

### Manicures and Pedicures

Sometimes, a little mani-pedi pampering session with your girlfriends thrown in during your pregnancy is a much-needed treat. And you'll be glad to hear that manicures and pedicures are safe for pregnant mums, according to Dr Liew. Just be sure to check that the nail salon you are going to uses equipment that are clean and

sterilised (don't forget to do this if you are doing the mani-pedi yourself!). This will prevent you from getting a nail infection from the equipment, which you definitely want to avoid while pregnant. As Dr Liew says, "Nail infections are not uncommon and the manifestation of the nail infection may be exaggerated during pregnancy."

You should also make sure that the area where you are getting the mani-pedi is well-ventilated. This is just a precaution if you get nauseous more easily during your pregnancy.

### Hair Dyeing

Wish to freshen up your hair colour or in the mood to go for a complete change? The good news is that hair dye is safe to use during pregnancy, says Dr Liew. "However, if you have a history of sensitive skin or other form of contact allergy, I would suggest not to dye your hair as you can develop a severe allergic reaction to hair dye, which can lead to blistering eruption and may end with the use of oral steroids and oral antibiotics during pregnancy," she adds.

### Facials

You might have the coveted pregnancy glow, so a facial might be unnecessary, but having a facial is a great way to give yourself a break from your daily stressors as well as to rejuvenate your skin from any harsh ingredients and environmental pollutants.

Fortunately, facials are fine for pregnant mums, as long as you check what kind of products the facial aesthetician will be using. "Choose a gentle facial and avoid harsh products or retinol based products in the facial treatment," says Dr Liew.

If you went for facials regularly prior to your pregnancy, the products your aesthetician used might have been completely fine on your skin.

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some common  
postpartum  
skin problems?



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However, the way your skin reacts to products may change throughout your pregnancy. So, there is a possibility for your skin to react differently to those same products. Just be sure to keep this in mind when you are going for your next facial, and always err on the safe side if you are unsure about a product your aesthetician is using.

### Laser Treatments

Thinking of upping the ante on your skin game and going for a laser treatment? Or maybe you have regular appointments for laser hair removal? Depending on the kind of laser treatment you are planning to schedule, it might be best to avoid them during pregnancy. This is due to the lack of data on the safety of laser equipment on the foetus, according to Dr Liew. But if you decide to continue with your treatments, be sure to check with your aesthetician or doctor that the treatments are safe for pregnancy.

### Botox Injections

Botox treatment involves the injection of a toxin known as botulinum toxin

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into the skin. In cosmetics, Botox is used for the purposes of reducing fine lines and wrinkles.

Very little research has been done on the effects of Botox injections on a foetus, but most – if not all – experts overwhelmingly agree that pregnant women should avoid them.

As Dr Liew explains, “Botulinum toxin should be avoided in pregnant women (unless for medical reasons) as the effect on [the] human foetus is unknown. Botulinum toxin helps to block nerve transmission and therefore may affect the foetus. In animal studies, the toxin can affect the development of the animal foetus.”

Again, when it comes to the safety of your baby, it is better to stay on the safe side and skip any Botox appointments.

### Skin Tanning

Want to get a bronze glow to your skin without the harmful effects of excessive sun exposure? If you were thinking of getting a tan by using a tanning bed, think again. In fact, Dr Liew says that tanning beds are something that all women should avoid, not just pregnant ones. “Tanning beds increase the risks of skin cancers and may cause sunburn. Ultraviolet exposure from tanning beds (not for a medical reason) can suppress one’s immune system,” she explains.

If you are still craving that tan, apply a tanning cream instead. This is a safer option but ensure you do not have a history of sensitive skin.



Dr Liew also recommends avoiding the spray formula because “the effect of inhaling the particle is unknown”.

### Teeth Whitening

Everyone wants sparkling, white gems but if you are pregnant, it is best to delay any teeth whitening plans until after your delivery. Dr Mavis Tan, dental surgeon at Raffles Dental, tells us why: “Teeth whitening is an oxidation process using hydrogen or carbamide peroxide. These chemicals tend to break down fast in the body.

However, there is insufficient data to indicate if these chemicals will pass to the foetus and cause any harm in the baby’s development.

It is prudent to err on the side of caution and consider delaying teeth whitening until after childbirth as it is a non-essential and non-emergent procedure.”

If, however, you still wish to go for teeth whitening treatment, Dr Tan recommends opting for the chairside version with light activation because there is less risk of you ingesting any chemicals. This is preferred over at home kits that use chemicals in fitted trays as “there is close monitoring by dental professionals to suck away any fluid in the mouth during the procedure”, she says. □