

CONNECT WITH YOUR CHANGING BODY

Beauty



Relax and unwind

Simple precautions can keep you safe (and oh-so-mellow) at the spa.

Pregnancy is the perfect time to get pampered, but keep in mind that your changing body requires unique precautions. "There are three main rules for spa treatments during pregnancy: avoid heat, fumes and lying flat on your back," says Kimberly Gregory, M.D., an OB-GYN at Cedars Sinai Hospital in Los Angeles. Jacuzzis, saunas and steam rooms raise your body temperature high enough to harm fetal development; keep water or air temperatures below 100° F and indulge for no more than 10 minutes. Go ahead and have a facial, but select a treatment formulated for sensitive skin—pregnancy hormones tend to make skin more prone to irritation.

Wait until the second trimester to get a massage, and only see a certified prenatal massage therapist. Massage tables with "cutouts" allow pregnant women to lie belly-down but should be avoided since lower-back and uterine-ligament strain could result; an experienced prenatal massage therapist will have you lie on your side with a body pillow. Some aromatherapy essential oils, including rosemary, eucalyptus and peppermint, can cause nausea or contractions, so opt only for pregnancy-safe scents such as lavender, rose and jasmine.

No matter how you treat yourself, enjoy your "me time." It's the last you'll have for a long while! —JEANNE FAULKNER