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### Beauty

## The Elusive Glow

By May Yip  
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I'm beginning to think that the so-called "pregnancy glow" is a myth concocted by astute marketing gurus tasked by the government to promote higher birth rates.

Why? I'm in my fifth month of pregnancy and hormones have been wreaking havoc on my normally well-behaved skin. Gone are the days when I could pamper my skin with layers of anti-ageing serums, night and day creams, acne treatments and gorgeously scented body butters. This has got to be a pretty low-maintenance bun that I have in the oven — luxurious skincare products causes my ultra-sensitive skin to break out into spots or rashes. So much for a glamorous nine months!

However, I am determined not to ditch my entire preggo primping regimen (god forbid!). Instead, I have been on a quest to discover skin-pampering products that prevent me from looking like A) a pimply prepubescent or B) I'm permanently fatigued (which I really am).

I have been lucky pre-pregnancy to have been blessed with relatively clear skin. But whenever a stubborn acne blemish appears around my nose area, it takes weeks to disappear, and leaves a nasty mark thereafter. When I first realised I was preggers, I began noticing recurring bumps on my skin. And the worst part — it's been recommended that the over-usage of salicylic acid (a common ingredient in acne treatments) is to be avoided during pregnancy. Topical retinoids, another medication usually prescribed for acne, are major no-nos because some have been shown to cause birth defects!



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Sisley Ecological Compound

Thankfully, I discovered **Anti-Cyst Treatment by Renee Rouleau**, a lightweight gel that is dabbed onto skin to speed up the recovery of a newly formed cystic blemish. It saw me through to my second trimester, when, lo and behold, I witnessed that pregnancy glow that everyone talked about.

Suddenly, my skin smoothed and cleared by itself. However, it was still hyper-sensitive to rich creams and serums. The only moisturiser that seemed to hydrate and soothe without aggravating my skin was Sisley's Ecological Compound.

According to the kind folks at Sisley, the Ecological Compound is incredibly gentle on skin and could also be used by men as a soothing after-shave balm. I began thinking, perhaps the reason the lightweight emulsion doesn't aggravate my skin is because of its plant-based formula, and I started looking into more 'natural' beauty products.

**"If you're expecting and never bothered to read the ingredients list on your beauty product's label, it's time to start!"**

Caleb, manager of The Naturalist Grandeur at The Esplanade Mall, explained that organic products are free of ingredients such as parabens, synthetic fragrances/colours, and mineral oils which may increase the chances of skin sensitivity. Phew, if you're expecting and never bothered to read the ingredients list on your beauty product's label, it's time to start!

Dr Karen Soh, aesthetics doctor at Prive Clinic in Raffles Place, also warned against products that contain benzoyl peroxide, lead, hydrocortisone and phthalates.



Organic beauty products tend to be free from harmful chemicals, such as Henry Tianus from The Naturalist Grandeur



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While organic products may not contain harmful chemicals that may affect foetal development, it is perhaps more essential to look out for products that are hypoallergenic to prevent nasty skin reactions — a tip I should have heeded before I began slathering on expensive body creams in the hope of preventing stretch marks, but wound up with a less-than-sexy rash instead!

So now I know what not to apply on my itchy skin during pregnancy, what can I do to pamper myself during this period?

If you're not hyper-sensitive, Caleb has suggested The Naturalist Grandeur's in-house blend of Certified Organic Extra Virgin Olive Oil, Certified Organic Rosehip Oil and Certified Organic Argan Oil as these plant base oils are high in omegas and vitamin E to increase skin elasticity and prevent stretch marks. Essential oils should be avoided during this period, however, so do take note when you're using an emollient oil product!

And to fake that pregnancy glow, Dr Soh has given the go-ahead for microdermabrasion for effective exfoliation. Regular hydrating facials that also decongest are essential for maintaining luminous, blemish-free skin. Finally, a couple of reasons for mums-to-be to put their best faces forward during these nine months!

Photos: Model image from Prive Clinic; product images from respective brands

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