



Healthy Families Homebirth

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Breast Changes during Pregnancy

Pregnancy indicates to your body that an infant is coming and your breasts will prepare to feed your child. The breasts get ready for lactation by increasing in size, nodularity, areola pigmentation, and the Montgomery glands become more prominent. Colostrum is present around the 12th week and may leak from the breast in the third trimester. The breast will become fuller and may develop stretch marks as the skin stretches. Increased hormones may make the breast more sensitive and tender.

Helpful tips for your changing breast:

- Wear a supportive bra without underwire
- Massage your breast frequently. This serves two purposes: to become familiar with natural changes that occur and to increase circulation to the glands and lymph nodes.
- Size doesn't matter. Small breast, large breast, and medium sized breast can all adequately feed their newborn.
- The shape of your nipple: flat, inverted, or erect nipples all have the same potential to feed your newborn. The newborn will "pull-out" the nipple when suckling occurs. There are things that we can watch for if your baby is suckling well. If there is concern about the shape of your nipple, then cranio-sacral therapy could potentially help move the small adhesions that make a nipple flat or inverted.
 - I don't recommend preparing the nipples in any other way. I believe preparing the nipples causes undue stress that may not even be a problem once the baby is born.
- Some breast surgeries could influence milk production. Once your baby is born we will see how well the baby is suckling and gaining weight. You can acquire some donated milk before delivery, if you want to have some milk available just-in-case (keep frozen).
- Hand expression of Colostrum prenatally is a helpful tool. First, it will help you feel how to express your milk if you need to do so later. Secondly, storing Colostrum can be useful if the milk is needed for a hospital transfer.

This is general information. Please speak to your health care provider about your unique health needs.



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Healthy breast growth during pregnancy includes addressing your personal feelings about your breasts and breasts in general. It is also a time to explore how you feel about breastfeeding, breastfeeding in public, and breastfeeding with friends and family. Writing in a journal can help get all your feelings on paper and provide a resource for what you may want to explore further. Talk to your care provider and attend Le Leche League meetings to address any other concerns.

Resources:

www.llli.org

Le Leche League International's web support offers information on a wide range of issues.

<http://www.breastfeeding.com/>

Has article and latest research on breastfeeding. Also provides an online community for mothers.

<http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/>

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention's web site promoting and supporting breastfeeding. The site provides statistics, research, and publications on breastfeeding.

References:

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Romm, A. J. (2003). *The natural pregnancy book: herbs, nutrition, and other holistic choices*. Berkeley, CA: Celestial Arts.

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