

Feeling good

HEALTH & FITNESS FOR MOMS-TO-BE



sound decisions

SHE'S SNUG IN YOUR BELLY, but it's not too early to introduce Baby to your favorite lullaby. In fact, repeatedly playing a mellow tune for your little one during pregnancy could stimulate her long-term memory. In a Finnish study, one group of moms-to-be reprised "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" almost 100 times in the months before labor, while another group didn't. Both sets then cued up the song for their infants, and those who'd heard the melody in the womb reacted with more brain activity. For additional ways to spark your bambino's senses, turn to Birth & Beyond, pg. 12.

STEVE GREER



healthy beat

Right about now, living on pasta and bagels seems pretty appealing, but don't forget the fresh stuff! A diet rich in produce will ensure a fitter heart, suggests a study published in the *American Journal of Epidemiology*. Researchers found that adults who consumed the most fruits and vegetables per day showed a 15 percent lower risk for fatal cardiovascular disease. Strawberry-carrot smoothie, anyone?



HOW MUCH LESS LIKELY WOMEN WERE TO GIVE BIRTH PREMATURELY WHEN THEY WERE OVERSEEN BY BOTH AN OB-GYN AND A MIDWIFE

delivery service

"I can birth this baby solo!" said no mom-to-be, ever. And a review in *The Cochrane Library* suggests that one type of assistance can be particularly beneficial: Women whose pregnancies were overseen by both a midwife and an OB-GYN were 23 percent less likely to give birth prematurely. They were also 19 percent less likely to have a miscarriage before 24 weeks than women who relied on OBs alone. The optimized outcomes could stem from more frequent check-ups, which result in earlier detection and treatment of complications.

on the mark

Gridlock. Spam. Irritating coworkers. Certain problems are beyond our control—stretch marks included. And while a new U.K. study found that 90 percent of pregnant women face these skin woes, there are still steps one can take to reduce their appearance. Anne Chapas, M.D., of NYC's Union Square Laser Dermatology, offers her best tips.

1. TREAT EARLY.

The newer the stretch mark, the easier it is to remedy, so begin moisturizing your stomach, legs and butt with an oil-based lotion ASAP.

2. DON'T GET FANCY.

No need to spend a bundle on a pricey tonic. Just look for a fragrance-free lotion that has hyaluronic acid, which locks in moisture.

3. KEEP IT UP.

Once you're done breast-feeding, you can start using scar treatment cream, like Mederma Stretch Marks Therapy or prescription Retin-A, to fade those pesky pink lines.



PHOTOGRAPHY: DAVID MALAN (fruit); RUSLAN DASHINSKY (stomach)

WHAT IS IT?

vena cava (vē-nə-'kā-və) n.

A large vein that carries blood from your lower regions to your heart. It's one of the reasons docs advise pregnant women against sleeping or exercising on their backs; the growing fetus can place too much weight on the major vessel and cause reduced blood flow to your heart and uterus (and, thus, your baby).



WANT MORE? Get exactly what you need to know for a healthy pregnancy and the best start as a new mom by downloading *Fit Pregnancy's Trimester Guide* and *Mom & Baby* on your tablet. They're free for a limited time from appstore.com/fitpregnancy or fitpregnancy.com/android.



blues clues

You're not alone if you've felt down in the dumps since getting the big news: Prenatal depression affects about 8 percent of pregnant women in the U.S. per year, according to the Centers for Disease Control. But getting help not only benefits you—it's also key for your bambino's long-term health. A new study in *JAMA Psychiatry* suggests that the more severe a mom-to-be's condition is, the more likely her child is to suffer from depression after the age of 18. Fortunately, treatment can decrease the impact on your little one and—just as importantly—help stabilize your mood as well. Talk to your OB-GYN about how you're feeling and ask for a referral to a therapist or psychiatrist who may suggest counseling or prescribe pregnancy-safe antidepressants.

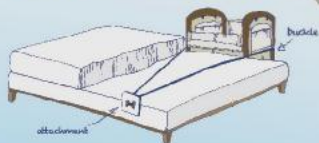


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