



Undoing Pregnancy Damage

Problem areas that might still be lingering post-pregnancy and how to fix them

The good news is that many of the unsightly veins that pop up during pregnancy do go away on their own—it just requires patience (yet again). **Dr. Rebecca Baxt—a board-certified dermatologist based in New York City and New Jersey who practices at CosMedical—doesn't suggest looking into treating varicose veins until three to six months after delivery and until you're finished breastfeeding. After that, any remaining veins can often be reduced with sclerotherapy treatments (injecting a solution directly into the vein causing it to scar and collapse) that are done every four to six weeks. Dr. Baxt also notes that legs can look worse before they look better, so these treatments are best to schedule in the fall or winter.**

Facial Spider Veins

“Again, wait for the hormones to settle down as some of the facial spider veins will go away on their own,” says Dr. Baxt. After giving your body sometime to adjust to the post-pregnancy hormonal drop, any remaining spider veins can be cleared using a pulsed dye laser—a treatment that works incredibly well, says **Dr. Baxt**, or possibly an intense pulsed light treatment. Often times, just one treatment is all it takes to a spider-less complexion, she says

Melasma

You probably know melasma better by its pseudonym “pregnancy mask,” which consists of dark spots around the face caused by (you guessed it) hormones.

Though there isn't surgery treatment for melasma, **Dr. Baxt** recommends strict sun avoidance and wearing sunscreen and/or hats whenever you're outdoors. If the problem doesn't subside on its own, there are other treatments to explore, such as bleaching treatments (using hydroquinone cream or azelaic acid) or retinoid treatment. If there's still minimal improvement, chemical peels or intense pulsed light or fraxel laser treatment may be additional options, says **Dr. Baxt**.

Stretch Marks

If you're on a mission to try every "stretch mark" cream on the market, stop wasting your money. **"There are lots of creams sold for stretch marks, none of which work at all,"** says **Dr. Baxt**. "There is a lot of research into this area, and as of now, no great solution to stretch marks." Despite this, Dr. **Baxt** notes a few solutions that can make stretch marks less noticeable. If your stretch marks are red, **Dr. Baxt** recommends a pulsed dye laser, which can remove redness, help restructure the collagen, and possibly improve the skin's appearance. For older, white stretch marks, **Dr. Baxt** recommends fraxel laser since laser resurfacing can sometimes help improve the texture