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The Mom's Guide to Getting Her Glow Back

By Dori Price, June 18, 2019



As a new mom, I wasn't surprised when dark circles and bags appeared under my eyes. (New baby equals no sleep, right?) However, I was unnerved when my skin went from that legendary pregnancy glow — plump, smooth, and dewy — to tired-looking and deflated. According to California-based dermatologist [Dr. Anna Guanche](#), loss of pregnancy weight and hormones play a big role in these types of postpartum skin changes. "Women often experience loss of volume, sallowness, and dullness pretty soon after having a baby," she says. That said, you don't have to just accept these changes — with a few tweaks to your skincare and aesthetics regimen, you can get some semblance of that pregnancy glow back. Below, the exact skincare ingredients to get you glowing, as well as some professional treatments you might want to consider trying.

Know which ingredients make you glow

Thankfully, there are a bevy of skin-brightening ingredients to improve lusterless skin; antioxidants and alpha hydroxy acids (AHAs) are two of the most renowned. One of the most tried and true antioxidants is vitamin C, which helps brighten skin while also protecting against free radical damage. Look for a skin booster that contains the ingredient, such as Mary Kay® TimeWise® Anti-Aging Vitamin C Activating Squares (\$24). Resveratrol, derived from grapes, is another powerful antioxidant that protects the skin surface and also can have a calming effect on sensitive skin. Try Caudalie® Premier Cru™ The Cream (\$140), which has the added benefit of vitamin E-rich grapeseed oil.

For AHAs, glycolic acid is Guanche's ingredient of choice. It gently, yet deeply, exfoliates to make skin look brighter and healthier, and is considered to be safe to use while breastfeeding. Try the Glytone® Exfoliating Serum (\$42-50), which comes in three different concentrations so you can choose the



strength that best suits your skin type. Azelaic acid is another skin brightener. It's particularly useful for treating the "pregnancy mask" many women experience — otherwise known as melasma — that can cause skin to darken in patches on the face. (Ah, the joys of pregnancy!) Guanche recommends using products with azelaic acid to reduce discoloration and brighten overall skin tone. Try Paula's Choice® 10% Azelaic Acid Booster (\$36) or The Ordinary® Azelaic Acid Suspension 10% (\$8), which both feature a high concentration of this star ingredient to help brighten skin.

Lastly, don't neglect those dark circles — no new mamas are getting enough sleep! Guanche recommends ColoRescience Total Eye® 3-in-1 SPF 35 (\$69). It has a pearlescent, light-reflecting quality that brightens the whole eye area, contains SPF, and can be worn alone or under makeup. (Discover more dermatologists' favorite concealers here.)

Consider In-Office Treatments

If you are ready to go a step further with your glow mission, there are a few non-invasive treatments you can do in the doctor's office. One option is microneedling, the delivery of tiny punctures to the skin. These wounds trigger the skin's healing response, which ultimately produces more collagen. "This is a great way to make skin look smoother and plumper," says Guanche. An additional benefit of microneedling: your skincare products penetrate deeper into the skin and work more effectively.

A photofacial is another way to brighten skin with minimal downtime. This treatment uses IPL (intense pulsed laser), a bright light that breaks up pigmentation when placed close to the skin. Little spots will come to the complexion's surface for about a week post-treatment and peel off on their own. You may have a few days of "freckle face," but it goes away pretty quickly to reveal smooth, even skin.

A third option is a Jessner peel, a very mild acid peel that removes dead skin cells, decreases hyperpigmentation and brightens overall skin tone with very little downtime. The peel is a mix of lactic acid, salicylic acid, and resorcinol, a peeling agent that helps the peel absorb evenly. Skin may feel extra dry for about a week after the peel. Guanche recommends three treatments, about a month apart for the best results. (Learn more about chemical peels here.)

For the bulge that can sometimes seem to persist well after the baby is born, you might consider fat freezing with the CoolSculpting® treatment. In fact, Guanche offers a treatment in her LA-based practice called the "Mommy Makeover Trifecta™" which includes CoolSculpting® to reduce stubborn fat along with Thermage® to tighten the skin on the belly.* This treatment is personalized for each patient according to their wants and needs, and can take several months to see results. (Read about three moms who tried CoolSculpting after having children.)

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