

Do You Have Stretch Marks?

In these times of cultural emphasis on physical perfection, anyone who is struggling with stretch marks on their skin may be concerned about their appearance, their location, and their marring of otherwise healthy-looking tissue. Yet most stretch marks are harmless in themselves; they merely represent the fact that skin in a certain area has been pulled or stretched beyond its original position or placement on the body, which can occur during pregnancy when the abdomen increases to accommodate the growing baby, or during weight gain, as extra pounds pull the skin beyond its original boundaries.

Sometimes stretch marks appear of their own volition, depending on your skin's elasticity and the type of exercises or daily movements you make that could impact your skin's conditioning. Dry skin may seem to shrivel in spots and lose its elasticity, producing reddish squiggly lines that will eventually shrink and fade, but perhaps not quite disappear. Although millions of people live with this condition and don't seem to mind a certain amount of stretched skin area, others fight the appearance of stretch marks with vehemence, determined to make their body as beautiful and smooth as it was before these tell-tale wrinkles appeared.

As with most unwanted conditions, prevention is the best treatment. To avoid the appearance of those fine lines on areas that are most likely to be affected, including the abdomen, thighs, buttocks, and the underside of the upper arms, make a point of eating a healthy diet. Most of us need at least two fruits and three fresh or cooked vegetables each day, along with a well-balanced set of meals that provide the nourishment we need to get and stay healthy. Some people may even want to take a multivitamin to be sure they are getting adequate protection.

Another thing that some experts recommend is to drink at least eight glasses of clear fluids daily. Water helps to rinse away bodily debris to keep skin supple and clear. Some medical researchers believe that drinking plenty of water can improve circulation and cleanse the body of toxins, both of which may help to reduce the appearance of stretch marks.

Avoid gaining extra pounds. Your frame has only a certain ability to accommodate all the weight you put on. After the limit is reached, extra tissue in the form of excess weight can become stretched and dimpled to create an unattractive and unhealthy impression. If you are already overweight, consult your doctor about a plan to lose the extra pounds.

Women who plan to get pregnant should follow a sensible diet. They also may want to rub baby oil or cocoa butter on their abdomens to keep them supple. Some women claim this helps to prevent the formation of stretch marks. Ask your doctor if this might work for you.

Of course, if all else fails, wear clothes that cover the offensive marks. But chances are that no one but you would notice them anyway, so bear them proudly as evidence of your life-giving ability, if you are a mother, or of your successful weight loss efforts if the marks are due to pounds you have lost.

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About the Author

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