



INTRAHEPATIC CHOLESTASIS OF PREGNANCY

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The skin is an important aspect of nursing care and assessment during pregnancy, as pregnant women experience a myriad of changes in immunologic, metabolic, hormonal and vascular functioning affecting the skin. Pregnant women presenting with dermatologic issues should never be ignored. Their care requires careful assessment (see Box 1), a detailed history and education regarding skin care and indications for pathologic abnormalities of pregnancy.

As the largest and most highly visible organ in the body, the skin often reflects the overall state of a person's health. A woman's positive self-image during pregnancy may be enhanced by healthy skin. In addition to the protective functions of the skin in preventing invasion of bacteria and retaining moisture to prevent dehydration, the skin is also a sensory organ, playing a crucial role in comfort during pregnancy. Skin discomfort and irritation can result from physiologic changes of pregnancy, many of which are considered benign, but some of which can be pathological.

Abstract: Itching is commonly reported by pregnant women and may be due to physiologic changes of pregnancy or could indicate a more serious health concern. Intrahepatic cholestasis of pregnancy, while classified as a pregnancy dermatosis, is actually a liver disease of pregnancy associated with significant fetal mortality and morbidity, as well as lifelong health risks for the offspring. In these challenging cases, nurses must understand the differential diagnoses and be prepared to provide comprehensive care, education and support to women with this condition. A case example is included. DOI: 10.1111/1751-486X.12175

Keywords: fetal programming | intrahepatic cholestasis of pregnancy | itching | pregnancy dermatosis | pruritus

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