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Next

## Can breastfeeding cause sagging

During pregnancy, you'll be offered plenty of parenthood advice. Friends, family, and even complete strangers will all offer you well intentioned but often unwelcome suggestions about all aspects of parenthood, including breastfeeding. Along with unhelpful advice like 'Dads should bottle feed to bond with baby' or 'Breastfeeding makes babies too dependent', they might also tell you that breastfeeding causes saggy boobs. This kind of misinformation leads many mothers to feel confused and start to doubt themselves. And hearing this when you're already breastfeeding, or planning to, can be disheartening. You might feel breastfeeding is more important than potential breast changes. Or, you might worry about how breastfeeding could affect the appearance of your breasts. However you feel, having concerns about changes to your body is completely normal. Despite wanting to provide the best for your baby, feelings about your postpartum body are valid. The good news is, you don't need to be concerned about breastfeeding causing saggy boobs. #1: What are considered saggy breasts? The medical term for saggy boobs is breast ptosis. The degree of ptosis (sagging) is measured by the position of the nipple in relation to where the underside of the breast attaches to the chest wall. The degree of ptosis can range from mild to severe. #2: What are normal breast changes during pregnancy? During pregnancy women experience fluctuations in the size of their breasts. Lots of changes happen in preparation for breastfeeding a baby. Some normal breast changes you might notice: The colour of your nipples and areola (the area around the nipple) gets darker The size of your areola increases Montgomery glands (the bumps around your areola) become more noticeable Blueish veins appear on the surface of your breasts Your breasts increase in size. Some women notice only one or two of these changes. Others might notice them all - and more. Your breasts are as unique as you are. #3: Does breastfeeding cause saggy breasts? If you're worried breastfeeding will cause saggy boobs, you can relax. Research shows breastfeeding doesn't cause your breasts to sag. Rather, it's pregnancy that can contribute to this. Pregnancy causes big changes in the size and structure of a woman's breasts. Your breasts undergo these changes whether you breastfeed your baby or not. The changes that occur during pregnancy cause the ligaments that support your breasts to stretch. You might be surprised to know this stretching begins as early as the first trimester of pregnancy. These weakening ligaments contribute to saggy boobs and the effect can increase with each pregnancy. #4: Do breast pumps make your breasts sag? Another myth you'll often hear is that using a breast pump will give you saggy breasts. Like breastfeeding, a breast pump doesn't cause saggy boobs. The changes that happen to your body during pregnancy are the main cause. #5: What else causes saggy breasts? Just being pregnant can contribute to having saggy breasts. There are also other factors, unrelated to pregnancy or breastfeeding, which also contribute to sagging. Some of these factors are: Age - your skin naturally loses some elasticity as you get older Genetics - your skin's natural elasticity can depend on your genes Weight - being overweight or obese reduces your skin's elasticity and overall muscle tone Weight loss - rapid weight loss contributes to loss of elasticity and muscle tone. Aim to lose any weight gained during pregnancy gradually Exercise - lack of regular exercise contributes to reduced muscle tone, affecting the muscles that support your breasts Smoking - reduces your skin's natural elasticity Breast size - in young women with large breasts, sagging might occur earlier in life due to gravity. #6: Can saggy boobs be prevented? You can't control your age or your genes. But you can control other factors that contribute to sagging breasts. If you avoid smoking, get some regular exercise and eat a healthy diet, you can give your body the opportunity to look and feel the best it can. During pregnancy and breastfeeding, there are ways you can support your breasts: Wear a well fitted, supportive maternity bra. You can read more about choosing the right bra in Nursing Bra - When Should I Get A Nursing Bra? Wear a specially designed sports bra for exercise; extra bouncing means extra strain on the ligaments that support your breasts Stay hydrated. This means inside and out! Drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration and moisturise regularly to help keep your skin supple. #7: How do you fix saggy boobs after breastfeeding? After breastfeeding, see a professional to be refitted for a new bra. Your breasts will probably return to their pre-pregnancy and breastfeeding size after your baby is weaned. It's important to size down accordingly to continue to support your breasts. Other breast concerns: when to see your doctor All of the breast changes already mentioned are normal. If you experience any of the following changes, it's important to make an appointment with your healthcare provider: Flu-like symptoms while breastfeeding (e.g. fever, muscle aches, chills, fatigue). These symptoms could be signs of mastitis. You can read more about mastitis in Mastitis Symptoms and Treatment Of Mastitis. Dimpling or puckering of your breast Unusual nipple discharge (e.g. pus or blood) Nipple retraction (nipple turns inward) A lump in your breast. If you are breastfeeding, check out Blocked Milk Duct - Symptoms and Treatments for more information about a possible blocked duct. While breastfeeding is certainly not to blame for the loss of perky boobs, there are other causes that are unavoidable. Ageing and a gradual loss of skin elasticity are inevitable for everyone. By following a healthy lifestyle you can reduce the effects of ageing on your breasts and body. The evidence speaks for itself. If you are currently breastfeeding, thinking about breastfeeding, or lost in a sea of unsolicited advice, then rest assured. You will not be sacrificing the appearance of your breasts by breastfeeding your baby. Enjoy this precious time. By breastfeeding, you're giving your baby the best possible start to a life of good health. Our bodies might change when we become mothers, but change isn't necessarily bad. It's simply different, and different can be new and beautiful too. Recommended reading: 5 Reasons Your Body Is Better Now That You're A Mother Verywell / Photo Illustration by Nusha Ashjaee / Getty Images The medical term for sagging breasts is ptosis. Breast changes such as ptosis happen naturally with age. But many other factors can lead to breasts that droop. Here's what you need to know about the causes, prevention, and treatment of sagging breasts. There isn't a specific age when you can expect your breasts to begin to sag. A person in their twenties can have droopy breasts, while someone in their forties can still have perky breasts. Because many things contribute to sagging breasts, people experience it at different times. Of course, age does eventually become a factor for everyone. If you escape drooping in your thirties and forties, you will most likely begin to notice the loss of elasticity and fullness in your breasts as you go through the hormonal changes of menopause. Ligaments in your breasts, called Cooper's ligaments, lift and support your breasts. Over time, these ligaments can stretch out and cause the breasts to sag. Loose skin or the loss of skin's elasticity can also lead to droopy, deflated breasts. Many things can influence when these changes will happen or the degree of drooping that you will experience. Here are some of the causes of saggy breasts. Age: Age eventually catches up to everyone. Sagging is just a normal part of the aging process, especially after menopause when hormone changes can affect the structure and volume of the breast tissue. Body mass index: People with a higher body mass index (BMI) tend to have larger breasts than people with a lower BMI. Exercise without support: Exercise that involves a lot of breast movement can put extra strain on the breast ligaments. If the breasts, especially large breasts, do not have proper support, it can lead to stretching of the ligaments and sagging of the breasts. Genetics: Heredity and the genes you get from your family play a part in the size and shape of your breasts, the strength of your Cooper's ligaments, and your body weight. Gravity: Gravity is working against you every day. While it pulls your breasts down, it strains and stretches your breast's ligaments. Number of pregnancies: The more children you have, the more stretched out your breasts will become. Size and shape: Smaller breasts with a rounder bottom tend to hold their shape better than larger or narrow breasts. Larger breasts are also more likely to succumb to gravity before smaller breasts. Smoking: Smoking causes the skin to lose elasticity, so smokers are more likely to develop saggy breasts. Weight loss or gain: Gaining or losing a good deal of weight, especially quickly, can change the shape of your breasts and stretch or shrink the skin surrounding them. Since there are so many factors that contribute to sagging, you can't completely prevent it. However, there are some things you can do to try to keep your breasts from sinking downward for as long as you can. Drink plenty of water. Keep your skin healthy and hydrated to help preserve its elasticity. Don't smoke. Quit or don't start smoking. It's not healthy for you or your breasts. Maintain a healthy weight. Eat a well-balanced diet, get a little exercise, and try not to gain or lose weight too quickly. Practice good posture. When you slouch and have poor posture, you're giving gravity more opportunity to pull at your breasts. Standing or sitting in a good position with your back straight and your shoulders back, can help support the breasts and even give you a natural lift. There isn't any research that says bras can prevent sagging. However, many people believe that wearing a comfortable, supportive bra can help to hold up the breasts and possibly keep the ligaments from stretching out, especially if you exercise or if you have large breasts. On the other hand, some people believe that bras cause sagging and that if you do not wear a bra, the ligaments in your breast will become stronger. One French study found that going without a bra did not cause sagging and could even improve breast firmness. It's important to note that the author of this study did recognize that it was small and did not represent people of all ages and breast types. People who are older, overweight, or have had children should not necessarily give up on wearing a bra. The breasts are not made up of muscles, but there are muscles in the chest behind the breasts. There are no exercises that can make droopy breasts perky again. But you can build up and tone the pectoral muscles of the chest and your upper body to enhance the look of your chest and improve your overall health. Exercises for the chest muscles include push-ups, chest presses, and butterfly curls. Although breastfeeding tends to take a good deal of blame for saggy breasts, it's not breastfeeding alone that causes the breasts to droop. Sagging is actually the result of pregnancy and other influences. Breasts go through many changes during pregnancy and grow larger to prepare for breastfeeding. Then, after a baby is born, breast milk fills the breasts, stretching the skin even more. Once you wean your child and the breast milk dries up, your breasts may appear smaller, less full, and even saggy. Of course, these breast changes can happen even if you decide not to breastfeed. After pregnancy and breastfeeding, the breasts may return to the way they were before, remain larger, or become smaller. If the breast tissue shrinks down, but the skin stays stretched, the breasts will look saggy. To try to minimize the effects of pregnancy and breastfeeding on your breasts: Don't smoke. If you smoke, try to quit. Not only does smoking contribute to saggy skin, but it's also dangerous for both you and your baby. Stay within the guidelines for weight gain during pregnancy. The more weight you gain during pregnancy, and while you're breastfeeding, the larger and more stretched out your breasts may become. Then, later when you want to lose weight, the stretched out skin is more likely to sag. Try to lose pregnancy weight slowly. When you lose weight quickly, it doesn't give your skin the chance to shrink down along with the weight loss. The skin can hang down and look saggy. It's healthier to lose weight slowly. Use a safe moisturizer on your breasts. Healthy, moisturized skin may bounce back better than dry skin. Just be sure to choose a product that's safe for people who are breastfeeding, or ask your doctor for a recommendation. Wear a supportive nursing bra during the day and at night while you're pregnant and breastfeeding. A nursing bra provides support to the ligaments in your breasts as they grow and become heavy with breast milk. Involution is the return of the breasts to the way they were before pregnancy and breastfeeding. About six months after you stop breastfeeding, your breasts should appear similar to their former size and shape, although they might be a little smaller or larger than they were before. After weaning, some people experience a greater degree of involution than others. Sometimes the breast tissue that produces breast milk shrinks all the way down, but the skin around the breast remains the same. In this case, the breasts may lose their shape and appear deflated. Severe breast involution may be a cosmetic concern, but it's not a medical problem. If you decide to have another baby, your breast tissue will once again grow and make breast milk. If you do not become pregnant again, your breasts may become fuller and return to their previous shape. But it could take a few years. If you are unhappy with the loss of perkiness in your breasts as you age or after pregnancy and breastfeeding, you may consider plastic surgery. Breast augmentation or a breast lift are two procedures that can restore the shape and size of your breasts. Keep in mind that if you are still in your childbearing years and would like to have a child or more children, breast surgery can interfere with breastfeeding in the future. Discussing this topic with your plastic surgeon is important. In a world where women are empowered, strong, intelligent, and leaders in every field, beauty is something that many still struggle with. Each person's definition of beauty can shape their self-image and self-esteem. Everyone wants to look and feel good, but when the mirror shows a body that is different from the idea of beauty seen on TV or in magazines, it can be hard. It's not always easy to accept the changes in your body and your breasts over time. But, try to remember that what you see on TV or in magazines does not represent most people. They are unrealistic images. And, between Photoshop and touch-ups, they are often not even real. It would be great if you can find peace in the body that got you to the point in your life you are now. But if you're truly unhappy, talk to your doctor. It's OK to do what you need to do to feel good about yourself. That way you can focus on being the healthiest and happiest that you can be.



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