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# Scents and sensitivity

Pregnancy can heighten your sense of smell so our Beauty Editor has been on the hunt for fragrances that are easy on the nose

People like to dole out advice when they find out you're pregnant. Some gleefully assured me it wouldn't be long before I had varicose veins, while others felt the need to share their nightmare birth stories in excruciating detail. I made the mistake of watching my first ever episode of *One Born Every Minute* when I was seven months pregnant and was so traumatised I'm still trying to work out ways of outsourcing the process.

Despite this, there's plenty that still comes as a total surprise. No one tells you that sleep goes out of the window almost the instant you see those thin blue lines (thanks so much, Mother Nature, I could have done with a final nine months of kip before the all-nighters kick in). And as someone whose job includes a considerable amount of time sniffing lotions and potions (it's work, really it is), I became more than a little fascinated by the seismic shift in my

sense of smell. The heightening is thought to be due to the surge of hormones coursing around your body and for me was quite unexpected – and not always a positive.

White fish, usually the most innocuous of the swimmers, would make me go green, while chorizo came a close second. My husband's aftershave Chanel Bleu, a long-term favourite of mine, was banished for being overbearing. And suddenly I had a great excuse to not even pretend to help take the bins out.

Chatting to others who have recently had babies, I heard of understandable repulsions (fried food, blue cheese, petrol) and a few more startling tales (one reported an aversion to the oilcloth used in Cath Kidston bags, another banished her husband from the marital bed when she decided he smelt like sour milk).

As for performing my ablutions, I quickly found

that sweet perfumes and skin creams were simply too much to handle, while anything deep and musky became an instant no-no. Even friends who felt they had got off lightly when it came to nasal nightmares reported a shift in their choices of beauty products.

I found myself rushing to the bathroom to wash off much-loved EDTs (eau de toilettes) that were irrevocably rendered OTT and would remain convinced they still lingered for hours after. The problem is, peak morning sickness isn't the time to start working your way through the beauty counters to examine your options, so if you're on the hunt for an aroma that will still delight, here's a selection of sensorial treats that worked for me.

My spritz of choice for the last few months has been **Jo Malone Wood Sage & Sea Salt Cologne (£42; 0808 281 0229)**, a savoury number that is anything but overbearing. It's as close as I've been able to get

to a brisk walk along cliffs to clear my head while trying to shake the early-morning fug.

Citrus scents are known to be outstanding when it comes to easing nausea, and **Jo Loves... Pomelo Fragrance (£45; 020 7730 6091)** is definitely on the money when you need a fruity lift. This is also clearly why perfumer Lyn Harris was inspired to blend the soft, sweet **Miller Harris Tangerine Vert Eau de Parfum (£65; 020 7079 1239)** when her sister was first pregnant, though she claimed to associate the comforting fruits with the smell of newborn babies' heads. Lyn also created the delightful fragrance *Coeur d'Été* during her own pregnancy while craving chocolate, pear, banana and liquorice. Sadly this splendid little number, which came packed with white flowers such as jasmine and heliotrope "to calm life down", was discontinued a couple of years ago so you'll have to look elsewhere for your new failsafe spritz.

Check out **Ormonde Jayne Osmanthus Eau de Parfum (£90; 020 7499 1100)** which is definitely worth a trial run. Golden citrus notes of pomelo mix with peppery pimento and uplifting sweet herbs linger lightly. And you won't go far wrong with **Clarins Eau Ressourçante (£32; 0800 036 3558)**, another fragrance beloved by pregnant women. Light, refreshing and highly addictive, the blend of basil, iris and cedarwood smells like serenity in a bottle for those frazzled, hazy days.

People have been singing the praises of ginger in tea and biscuits to aid travel sickness and general nausea for years, so it's no surprise that **Origins Ginger Essence Sensuous Skin Scent (£32; 0800 054 2888)** has a legion of fans who have employed it to help battle the dreaded morning sickness. The addition of soothing and calming clove bud and coriander provide a credible antidote to the side effects of early pregnancy.

Actually designed for babies and therefore delicate enough for the most sensitive of snouts, my final

suggestion is **Petit Guerlain Eau de Toilette (£80; 020 7730 1234)**, a tender scent that uses orange blossom, mimosa and honey over base notes of white musk to cocoon you beautifully.

Some women worry about wearing perfume on their skin while they have a bun in the oven, but pulse points aren't the only places to enjoy an aroma. You could always spritz it on to your undies or add a little to the underside of your locks (hair holds aromatic odours brilliantly). Equally, a citrus scent applied to a hanky may feel a little Marie Antoinette at first but can provide the perfect remedy for mild queasiness, especially when faced with nasty niffs on a commute.

Finally, a warning: during your first trimester, wear a fragrance you love at your peril. Our olfactory senses are so powerful that long after your pregnancy is little more than a distant memory, one whiff of something you wore in those early, delicate days will transport you back there in an instant. Are you willing to let one of your favourite scents be rendered entirely unwearable? ☹

