

# PRETTY CHEAP

Pregnant women don't have to spend a fortune to look good

When Dr Low Chai Ling (pictured) became pregnant with her second child last year, she decided to write a chapter about pregnancy and skincare for each month of her renewed journey towards motherhood.

The result is her book, *The Soft Touch: Secrets To A Beautiful Body In Pregnancy*. It will be published in April by Marshall Cavendish.

Topics covered in it include common skin problems during pregnancy, and whether it is safe to use certain beauty products and undergo procedures like microdermabrasion, chemical peels and intense pulsed light to remove hair.

The 31-year-old medical doctor co-runs an aesthetic practice at Raffles Place, The Sloane Clinic, with her husband, Dr Kenneth Lee, 35.

Ironically, men were the ones who convinced her that there was a need for such a book.

She recalls: "At my antenatal class, the husbands would come up to me to ask if it was safe for their wives to do things like perm or rebond their hair."

Her male colleagues, such as plastic surgeons and obstetricians, would also ring her up to ask similar questions.

For research, she looked up relevant medical studies published in journals in the last 10 years.

She also tapped into her professional network. For instance, when she wanted to know if the use of lasers to rejuvenate skin or reduce scars was safe for pregnant patients, she called up laser experts in the United States.

"The surprising thing I found out while writing the book is that there are a lot of things a pregnant woman can do to look good," she says.

She even tried out procedures like chemical peels on herself in order to adjust the concentration of the acid to make it more comfortable and suitable for pregnant women.

With her long wavy hair and tanned complexion, Dr Low looked poised and cheerful in a simple, black shift dress during the interview at her clinic in Caltex House.

This, despite the fact that she had just given birth to a 3.44kg baby boy, Aidan, last Saturday.

She put on 12kg during her first pregnancy and 15kg during her second.

A photograph of her first-born, a cute 18-month-old daughter by the name of Tyan, is her computer wallpaper.

While her second pregnancy was less worrying for her as she already knew what to expect, she says it brought with it a different set of skin problems.

"The first pregnancy, I had a lot of pigmentation problems, like a dark line down my tummy early on. The second time, I didn't have pigmentation, but I had oilier skin and acne."

Her book, she reveals, emphasises cheap and simple ways to take care of an expectant woman's changing body. She also doles out advice about drinking warm water and having small meals to stimulate the metabolic rate.

Instead of expensive pre-natal yoga lessons, she demonstrates exercises that can be done at home to limber up. She also introduces home-made skincare recipes from natural ingredients to help improve a woman's skin.

As to whether she wants another child, she says:

