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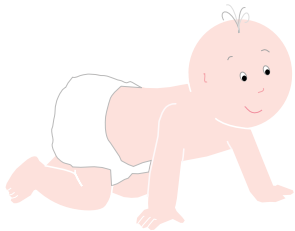
Postpartum Diva: Fashion after Baby

by Ann Douglas

It's the Mother of All Dilemmas: what to wear during the postpartum period while you're waiting for your body to regain its pre-baby shape. You wouldn't be caught dead wearing maternity clothing at this stage of the game for fear someone asks the question no new mom wants to hear ("So when are you going to have that baby?"), and yet you don't want to spend a fortune on new clothing that may only be needed for a few months' time, at most. So what's a new mother to do?

Here are a few tips on putting together a diva-worthy postpartum wardrobe that not only delivers maximum bang for minimum buck, but that's baby-friendly, to boot.

- **Raid your partner's side of the closet.** Men's shirts are figure-enhancing when teamed up with a pair of dark leggings and they're loose enough to allow you to nurse your baby with ease. Ditto for long vests or loose-fitting jackets and sweaters: they're both breastfeeding- and figure-friendly!
- **Make comfort your top priority.** Pick up a couple of pairs of leggings, elastic-waist pants containing Lycra, or pants with drawstring waists. This is no time to be trying to shoehorn yourself back into your pre-pregnancy jeans. Pants with a drawstring waist are a better bet for any mom who's just had a caesarean because the elastic in the leggings or the Lycra pants may be irritating to her incision site.
- **Give pants with pockets a pass.** Drawstring or not, they aren't going to be particularly flattering while you're sporting those few extra pounds. Side pockets draw attention to your hips while back pockets emphasize your behind. For a slimmer look, stick to wide-legged, pocketless pants: they'll help to create the illusion of a smaller bottom.



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- **Don't feel obliged to spring for a specially-designed breastfeeding top.** A loose-fitting shirt or sweater will do the job just as well and – in most cases – costs a whole lot less money.
- **Think wash and wear.** This is no time in your life to be parading around in silks and other fine fabrics. After all, babies don't give you any warning when they're about to launch into a full-blown diaper explosion or ooze a mouthful of milk down your back.
- **Master the art of camouflage.** Most new mothers find themselves left with a few extra pounds during the early few weeks and months after the birth. If you're self-conscious about the added girth around your middle, you might want to master the art of monochromatic dressing (dressing in all one color). A shirt and pant set in a dark color is one of the best fashion solutions for any mom who is trying to camouflage those few extra pounds.
- **Seek out colors that suit your hair color and skin tones.** If yellow or green make you look sickly, steer clear of those particular shades for now. This is one time in your life when you'll want to make color work for – not against – you.
- **Wear clothes that fit.** Trying to squeeze into clothing that is a size or two too small won't just look bad: it'll also remind you that you're still carrying around a few pregnancy-related souvenirs on your hips and thighs. If you're reluctant to spend much money on clothes that will (hopefully) be too big for you a month or two down the road, either borrow some clothes from a friend who has just lost weight or hit the thrift shops for a couple of garments to tide you over until you can squeeze back into your old clothes again.
- **Realize that it takes time to shed those pregnancy pounds.** It took you nine-and-a-half months to put on the weight, so don't expect it to disappear overnight. While it may be a while before you can squeeze into those skin-tight pre-pregnancy jeans, with any luck, you should be able to fit into your loose-fitting garments before long.