


SAMPLER

Does This Pregnancy Make Me Look Fat?



The Essential
Guide to Loving
Your Body Before
and After Baby

Claire Mysko and Magali Amadei

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Some names of those interviewed have been changed to protect their privacy.

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The Healthy Beauty Pledge for Mothers and Mothers-to-Be

I promise to . . .

Acknowledge that there is no such thing as the “perfect” body—
or the “perfect” mommy.

Never define my self-worth according to the number on the
scale or the size of my clothes.

Make decisions that are right for me. They don’t have to be right
for everyone else.

Ask for help when I need it. I’ll make a phone call, write an e-mail,
or send a text—whatever it takes to reach out for support.

Take care of myself and take time for myself, even if some days
I can only manage one-minute increments.

Separate the retouched, made-up beauty fantasies in the
media from what matters most to me in reality.

Work on developing a relationship with food that is about health,
nourishment, and enjoyment, not deprivation, indulging, and
punishment.

Stop all body-bashing talk with my friends, my colleagues, my
partner, my family, and myself.

Give up the mission to get my “prebaby body” back and start
focusing my energy on moving *forward* in my new life.

Remember that, one person at a time, healthy beauty is a
revolution—for ourselves and for our children.

Signed _____

Introduction

Let's get something out of the way right now. This book will not tell you how to get your prebaby body back. But don't stop reading yet. Instead, consider if you can relate to any of the following scenarios: A group of female colleagues meet for lunch. When the half-eaten grilled chicken salads are cleared from the table, they agonize over which dessert to share. A fudge brownie plus three spoons adds up to fifteen minutes of discussion about who thinks she's carrying a little extra weight these days and who can't believe she's being so "bad" by indulging. In a shop downtown, one friend gives another a pep talk through a dressing-room door, offering heartfelt reassurances that it's the fluorescent lights—not her thighs—that are the problem. On the other side of town, a pregnant woman sits in the waiting room of her obstetrician's office. Surrounded by tabloid magazines and pamphlets for Botox, she tries to steel herself for the moment she's been dreading all week: stepping on the scale.

As women, we are well-schooled in the language of weight loss and weight gain. Turn on your TV and count the minutes until you see a diet-related commercial. Log on to Facebook and you might find yourself staring at a muffin top ad or a quiz to determine if you are a certifiable lard ass. There is, to put it simply, a

lot of *noise* when it comes to the topic of slenderizing our bodies—and the volume gets louder once you’re expecting a baby and then adjusting to life as a new mom.

After more than a decade of work as beauty activists, we came to a profound realization: Pregnancy and new motherhood are the times when women go through the most insecurity-inducing body changes and when we have the *least* support to deal with those changes. By *support* we don’t mean the onslaught of articles that reveal which new mom celebrities fit back in their bikinis in five minutes by “just eating healthy,” or the “mommy makeover” specials that are increasingly prevalent on plastic surgeons’ Web sites. Neither of these are on our list of self-esteem boosters.

At the other end of the spectrum are the Bad Mommy Police, who will make women feel incredibly selfish for giving a minute’s thought to how we look when we should be showering every ounce of our attention onto our new bundles of joy. Don’t worry: There is a middle ground—and we will help you find yours, if you are pregnant, considering getting pregnant, or are home with baby.

We first met when Claire was the director of an eating disorders organization, a position she took after finally giving up her dangerous quest to be model-thin. Magali was an internationally renowned model who wanted to reveal the truths she knew about the fashion industry—the rampant retouching, the insane pressures on insanely young models, the difference between the pretty fantasies on those glossy magazine covers and the ugly realities of her real-life eating disorder. We teamed up with the goal of educating and raising awareness. However, as we traveled around the country talking to women, we quickly learned that the main event

was not the stories we were sharing, but the stories other women shared with us. Concerned women would fling their hands up in the air and ask what they could say to their friends who weren't eating enough. Others lined up to tell us how exasperated they felt after years of yo-yo dieting, or to share their secret behavior that "wasn't an eating disorder" but something else—something they hadn't confessed to anyone until that day. We saw the shame as women hesitated, and then continued with their stories. We recognized that shame because we'd felt it ourselves.

Magali got pregnant in 2005 and Claire got married in 2006. Motherhood was no longer some distant role we might someday step into, but something very real. We talked about how strange it was to suddenly find the details of Magali's pregnancy weight gain an acceptable topic of daily discussion at business lunches

A Silent Majority

Seventy-eight percent of women we surveyed who do not have children yet or do not plan to have children told us they have concerns about how pregnancy and motherhood could change their bodies. Most of them keep those concerns to themselves. Fifty-seven percent said they don't talk about the connections among pregnancy, motherhood, and body image with their friends. Fifty-one percent said they never discuss it with their partners.

and among friends, especially after all the years she'd invested in shifting her focus *away* from that number on the scale. We took notice of what other pregnant women and new mothers were talking about—and what they weren't. There was plenty of chatter about how everyone wanted to lose their baby weight and not lose themselves in motherhood, but how were women really coping with those pressures? There were shelves filled with books about work-life balance and op-ed pages devoted to “mommy wars” and “opting out.” Where was the thoughtful exploration of how pregnancy and motherhood changes a woman's relationship to her body and her sense of beauty and style? Tabloid baby bump-watch covers just weren't cutting it for us.

We asked real women—over four hundred of them—about their biggest body concerns related to pregnancy and motherhood. We heard from first-time mothers, veteran moms, women who don't have children yet, and pregnant women who described themselves as everything from “sexy” to “heffalump.” We also managed to track down some husbands and partners who were willing to give us the scoop on what they think about the expanding bellies, raging hormones, and what sex is like after baby arrives.

The women we interviewed made us crack up, cry, and believe with ever more conviction that when we women are honest with ourselves and with each other, we are unstoppable.

We want women to feel less alone. We want mothers and mothers-to-be to know that worrying about your appearance doesn't make you selfish or unfit for parenting. It's what you choose to *do* about those concerns that matters the most. For us,

staying silent and waiting to see what happens are never options. We're also not fans of the everything-will-be-okay-as-long-as-I-can-get-back-into-my-skinny-jeans approach. So while we will not be offering the secrets to getting your prebaby body back, this book *will* serve up some practical tips on how to love and respect your body through the amazing, awe-inspiring, and, yes, sometimes downright shocking changes of pregnancy and motherhood. We'll tell you all about those changes and you'll hear from women who have lived through them. We will provide real-life solutions for women who care about their looks *and* their babies, but are not going to be working out for two hours a day anytime soon (or ever). We'll offer advice for those who have struggled to accept their bodies, only to face the absolute certainty of weight gain in pregnancy and the complete uncertainty of how they'll cope with it. We'll give you the uncensored truth about everything from milky boobs to prebaby bikini waxes. Celebrities, style, beauty, fitness, and body-image experts will all weigh in; and we'll throw our two cents into the mix as well.

From the “What am I getting myself into?” side of things is Claire, who has a major case of baby fever and plans to do something about it soon. In the “been there, survived that” category is Magali, who is understanding more and more each day how the reflection she sees of herself shapes the reflection her daughter sees when she looks in the mirror.

We won't sugarcoat this for you. The stakes are much higher when you bring kids into the picture. Of course, you won't always feel like a beautiful, glowing goddess—and that's okay. But even after one of those “ugly” days, every woman deserves to go to sleep

believing deeply and implicitly in her own beauty. Our children need us to believe in our beauty. Each morning you wake up feeling stronger and more confident, you will be better prepared to help your daughters and sons find *their* strength and confidence.

“How much weight will I gain—and how fast can I lose it?”

“Will my partner still want to have sex with me after watching the birth?”

“How do I handle the know-it-alls, judges, and space invaders?”

“Will I end up wearing mom jeans forever?”

People might tell you you're glowing, but you just feel like you're growing, and perhaps you're not liking the changing image you see in the mirror. If you're like most expectant women, you're worried about what pregnancy and motherhood will do to your body, your sexuality, and your self-esteem (even if you don't want to admit it out loud for fear of the Bad Mommy Police). While the journey to motherhood is truly miraculous and brings forth life, it can also bring forth a myriad of legitimate concerns.

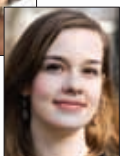
Enter beauty activists Claire Mysko and Magali Amadei, who reveal what to expect from your changing body and provide a much-needed reality check—for each stage of pregnancy—exposing the myths, challenges, and insecurities you'll face and what to do about them. From candid interviews with more than 400 women and men, as well as their own experiences, they help you discover:

- How to trust your changing body, appreciate it, and yes . . . even work it!
- Why you should be wary of the Hollywood “bump watch” and post-baby weight-loss stories—and how to take the focus off the scale.
- How to deal with your raging hormones.
- The truth and lies about loose skin, stretch marks, and sagging boobs.
- How to recognize when your body issues get extreme—and where to get help.

With startling confessions of women's unspoken fears and advice on how to remedy them, this essential compendium of girl-friendly advice will help *any* woman feel her best about her body, herself, and her role as a mom.



Magali Amadei is a mom and an acclaimed model who went public with her bulimia struggle. She has appeared on the covers of major magazines, including *Vogue*, *Glamour*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Elle*, and *Marie Claire*.



Claire Mysko is a body-image expert who served as the director of the American Anorexia and Bulimia Association. Amadei and Mysko founded Inside Beauty, a program that takes a critical look at cultural messages about beauty, and 5resolutionsblogspot.com, a website to help women find their true beauty. Visit www.insidebeauty.org.

Pregnancy

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