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The Girlfriends' Guide to Maternity Portraits

If you are asking yourself, "What should I wear or bring to the studio for my maternity portrait session?" you've come to the right spot.

For starters, please try to avoid wearing anything too tight or restrictive to avoid creating dents or marks on your skin for a couple of hours prior to your session. (I know, I know, easier said than done, huh? Everything is tight when you're pregnant!)

Here are a few ideas for clothing and props. The following items are only suggestions, so please feel free bring along any new ideas as well. It is better to bring along too much and not use something than to be at the studio and wish you had packed a specific item.

- Panel-free pants or jeans.
- Black pants. Many of the darker poses that fade into shadows work best with black pants.
- A fitted non-maternity top. The goal is to have something that hugs your shoulders and breasts, but is a little bit too short to actually cover your belly.
- Your pre-pregnancy jeans, unbuttoned and unzipped. If you can fit into your pre-pregnancy jeans at all while pregnant, they will most likely have to be totally unzipped, so a word of caution prior to your shoot is to do a "bikini check" to see if there are any stray hairs visible.
- Lingerie
 - ✓ flesh toned strapless bra and panties to use with sheer fabrics. This will give the effect of "implied nudity" but will allow you to feel more comfortable during the shoot.
 - ✓ black panties, because a little sliver of them may be visible with unzipped pre-pregnancy jeans.

- ✓ A smooth bra and panties without bows or lace details. These items can be useful for silhouetted images (where the background is very bright, but the subject is a dark outline). A silhouette does not provide any detail or definition, just shape. Many women choose to do a nude silhouette to truly showcase their beautiful shape without revealing any detail (it's kind of like being a naked shadow). However, I have also created gorgeous silhouettes of expectant moms wearing a smooth bra and fitted panties or pants.
 - ✓ Any other pretty lingerie you specifically want to be photographed in. The earlier suggestions are for discreet lingerie to blend in, but if we are going to showcase the lingerie in the portrait then lacy or patterned stuff is great!
- Lacy or sheer lightweight robe.
 - A long pretty silk scarf that can be draped over your breasts and behind your back.
 - A button down shirt (your own or one of your husband's shirts). You can button the top part over your breasts and leave the bottom part unbuttoned over your belly. Or you can leave the whole thing unbuttoned, revealing the curve of your breasts. This can be done either braless or with a sexy bra.
 - Other tops that can either be unbuttoned to reveal your belly, are short enough to reveal your belly, or fitted enough to showcase the shape of your belly.
 - Black. If you are self conscious about excess weight and would like to do shadowy pose where it is difficult to tell where your body ends and the shadows begin, definitely bring black clothing. This can include black panel-free pants, a black tank top, a black button-down shirt, etc.
 - Sports bra or tank top (we can clip the tank top up in the back to expose your belly).
 - Special sentimental jewelry. (example – a necklace or earrings from your husband)
 - A hairclip. If you have long hair, you might opt to do some poses with your hair down and some with it piled loosely on your head.
 - Baby booties or a stuffed toy you have purchased for the baby.
 - A print of your ultrasound.
 - Keep in mind that your hands may be prominent in some of these poses. Therefore make sure to groom your nails. Natural looking nails, pale colors, or a french manicure photograph much better than dark nail polish colors.

- Your children or husband (is he a prop? Ha, ha.). Unless you are doing the portraits as a surprise for your husband, you might want to consider including him or his hands in a few poses. Plan to coordinate your clothing with your husband's or child's clothing.

One note on including older children in maternity portraits – I will do all of the poses involving the children first. Please plan to bring along another adult (grandparent, friend, or babysitter) who could take the kids somewhere for the remainder of the session. Kids do not have the patience to sit through a maternity session, and a photo studio is not a safe environment for a child to be totally unattended. And lastly, you will be much more relaxed if you do not have to worry about keeping an eye on your children while you are posing. When you are relaxed and enjoying your photo session, that feeling will come through in the final portraits.

Lastly, I would like to stress that this is your special photo session and you are in control of what we shoot. I want the session to be a fun experience and would never push someone outside of their personal comfort zone. If some items in the list above do not appeal to you, no problem! I have posed for maternity portraits myself and have probably had some of the same questions and concerns that you do. Please don't hesitate to call me to talk things thru.

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