

“14 Pounds”
by Patty Caya

Celebrity moms are all the rage right now and children have become the ultimate fashion accessory. Pregnancy has become just another aspect of pop culture where celebrities and supermodels create the rules of style. The problem is: they cheat.

They flaunt their “bumps” and shed their pregnancy weight, effortlessly, just weeks after giving birth. Thus pregnancy has become one more thing your average person cannot achieve without unrealistic pressure to do so in the same manner as the celebrities.

Thankfully many celebrity moms have ballooned up to Shamu proportions during their pregnancies. I read somewhere that Catherine Zeta-Jones gained 80 pounds with her first child Dylan. Kate Hudson gained *at least* eighty pounds with son Ryder. And Jenny McCarthy reportedly weighed 203 before she gave birth to her son Evan. She of course lost the weight and probably posed naked somewhere, six hours after giving birth, but hey – at least she tipped the scales at 203 once upon a time.

One celebrity mom seems to have achieved the perfect pregnancy: she gained only fourteen pounds.

Like the woman who finds the perfect pair of Prada pumps in her size at a sample sale or the one who happened upon a cancellation appointment with a much-sought-after stylist, Posh Spice’s first pregnancy has become the stuff of urban legend.

I heard this bit of trivia on an E! television special about celebrity moms. None of the other things revealed were nearly as salacious as the fourteen pounds. The narrator and other celebrity moms offered their scorn for Skinny-Mommy Spice and accused her of being anorexic and not caring about her unborn child. They chided her lack of weight gain as irresponsible and reckless.

Other celebrity moms with their Zone diets, personal trainers and at-home yoga instruction cannot achieve what a mere Spice Girl did; have a baby and not look like the Hindenberg draped in Dolce & Gabbana.

Now *that's* Girl Power.

However she achieved this enviable accomplishment, she should market it. I yearn to know her secret and I'm sure I'm not the only one who would be willing to pay top dollar for the privilege.

If I knew I would gain so little weight, even I could consent to having a baby. I don't have a personal trainer/yoga teacher/chef/nutritionist who is going to come to my house after I have a baby and coax me back into better shape than before I started. If I gain 80 pregnant pounds I'll be 70 pounds over weight for the rest of my life. Fourteen pounds I could handle – even *I* could lose that.

I've seen Cindy, Reese, Sarah Jessica and Gwyneth all embrace their pregnancies as they strut their pregnant stuff on the red carpet and on movie sets and I am just as repulsed by their “bumps” as I am by the average pregnant woman walking down the street. And it's not just the weight gain that gets me riled. I'm not afraid to admit (though I fear retribution): I am repulsed by the pregnant female form.

I don't see the beauty or the “miracle of life.” I see a large, uncomfortable, obscenely overweight woman whose body is distended beyond recognition.

I see a woman who wants to sit down.

I once made the mistake of taking a yoga class that followed a pre-natal class. Sitting there in the dressing room I was surrounded by the Miracle of Life. No matter where I averted my eyes there was no escaping the parade of bellies in all shapes and

sizes. With their inflated inside-out belly buttons, stretch marks and discoloration, I saw nothing that I would categorize as beautiful or miraculous. The only miracle I witnessed was that none of them popped while trying to contort their swollen forms into yoga poses. The experience left me scarred.

When I saw Catherine Zeta-Jones win her Academy Award all hopped-up on hormones and swathed in a designer tent, I didn't think, "Ah, the beauty of the pregnant form", I thought, "Ewww, gross. She looks awful."

No one in that condition wants to prance around in some Marc Jacobs mumu and four-inch Manolo Blahniks. It's just not natural. And it's certainly not comfortable.

My feelings don't waver much whether presented with pregnant friends and family members or strangers and celebrities. I am repulsed. And that is precisely how I feel about my dear, close friends when one after another they join the ranks of the procreating masses. I think they all look awful. Maybe not month three or four, but somewhere around seven or eight they all start to look like my dog before she had puppies - fat and miserable.

Her belly was so tight you could bounce a quarter off her bumpy mound. She was so tired she would waddle over to her food bowl, fill her mouth, walk four inches and spit it on the ground and lay down next to it – too exhausted to even chew. I felt so bad for her. If I had possessed the skill I would have taken a scalpel and cut out those damn puppies myself. I wanted my happy, fun, playful dog back. I wanted to free her from the incarceration of pregnancy.

That's usually how I feel about my friends toward the end of their pregnancies too, but it's not the kind of thing you're allowed to say out loud at a baby shower. Society frowns on that kind of honesty, especially when it comes to pregnant women.

We've all seen them – the pregnant women who've gained only enough weight to fall within the “expected range” yet their ass barely fits in a chair and they can kiss their favorite jeans good-bye forever. We know that fat isn't going to come off without the aid of a surgeon's knife and a suction device, but we're expected to lie when we see them. We're supposed to remark on how they haven't gained *that* much weight – really! And how it's *only* in their belly. We're supposed to say they look great or that they are glowing or some such bullshit.

We are supposed to lie.

If everyone started telling pregnant women the truth, we would be risking the future of civilization. We are not just being polite. We are lying to protect the propagation of the species.

When I see these women, I say nothing. I just stare - paralyzed by fear.

I know it's just a matter of time before I get my come-uppance. My rude awakening will happen someday when the little stick turns blue or pink or whatever it turns when one life begins and another one ends. When that happens I am sure I will start to swell and I won't stop until the kid is married and has a kid of his own.

My only solace is that hopefully by then Posh Spice will have written her memoir, entitled “14 Pounds.”