

## Body After Baby

Having a baby is a huge accomplishment, and it takes a toll on a woman's body. While some women may embrace their new curves, others can't wait to take off the weight and turn to plastic surgery. 325,000 women went under the knife for a so-called "mom-job" in 2007. The combo cosmetic procedure includes a breast lift, tummy tuck, and liposuction.

### *Top 5 Facts about Your Body After Baby*

1. You may not feel as sexy in your own skin. "After you have a baby, your body changes," notes Dr. Hilda Hutcherson, MD, gynecologist and author of "What Your Mother Never Told You About Sex." "Even if you get back to your pre-pregnancy weight, you'll be a little rounder, and everything will look different. Some women experience decreased desire because of that."
2. Breasts change after childbirth. Although breasts enlarge during pregnancy and while breastfeeding, afterwards, some women go down a half or full cup from their original pre-pregnancy size.
3. Experts say breastfeeding is not a likely cause of sagging breasts post-pregnancy. Dr. Brian Rinker, lead author of the research being published in *Aesthetic Surgery Journal*, says many women undergo plastic surgery to counteract the effects of pregnancy on their bodies, with the common postpartum complaint of sagging breasts. However, the study found other factors -- such as older age, higher body mass index, and a history of smoking -- are responsible for breast sagging experienced by new moms.
4. You may worry about your vagina being "good enough." "Most women have heard the myth -- and it is a myth -- that childbirth changes your vagina forever," Hutcherson says. "They worry that they'll never be as tight as they were before, so therefore their man won't enjoy having sex with them as much as he did before. Even though that's not true -- your vagina will go back to normal, especially if you do kegels -- those worries can have an adverse effect on your sexual experience."
5. When it comes to stretch marks, the truth is that they are nearly impossible to erase. Topical products like cocoa butter may help their appearance, and could help prevent them, but this has not been scientifically proven, according to Dr. Saul from Beverly Hills Dermatology.

The "extreme mom job" is a total body lift that is growing in popularity as a solution to all that extra skin that hangs on when someone's lost a lot of weight. Although there were only 207 total body lifts performed in the U.S. in 2000, over 10,000 body lifts were performed in 2007. According to plastic surgeon Dr. Dennis J. Hurwitz, author of "The Total Body Lift Book," this is largely due to a huge rise in extreme weight loss surgical procedures. (200,000 Americans were estimated to get gastric bypass surgery in 2008.) However, Dr. Hurwitz, who has performed hundreds of these procedures, says many

moms are also getting the procedure done as well to combat loose, hanging skin after childbirth.

## ***What Moms Can Do about Body After Baby***

Photos of toned celeb moms on the beach in bikinis just months after giving birth are causing some real moms to feel insecure about their post-pregnancy figures. Check out Halle Berry's real post-baby workout regime for some perspective -- most average moms do not have the time or money to participate in a similar program.

Halle Berry's routine:

- 60 minutes, five days a week with trainer to the stars, Ramona Brazaga;
- Each session includes three cardio segments, two circuit segments, and one core segment;
- Berry eats lots of vegetables, lean proteins, and complex carbohydrates, as well as drinks large quantities of water.

The topic of celeb baby weight has even spurred a new word, "pregorexia" -- a condition where women get so obsessed with keeping their weight down during pregnancy that they go to extremes with diet and exercise, ultimately harming the health of their baby.

But since most moms can't afford personal chefs, private Pilates sessions, and those rumored delivery room tummy tuck/C-section combos, should we feel jealous of celebs whose basic survival depends on their ability to stay thin and beautiful?

"Women are used to having celeb envy, but new moms are particularly sensitive to it and feel judged as soon as they give birth," says Yvonne K. Fulbright, Ph.D., author of "Your Orgasmic Pregnancy: Little Sex Secrets Every Hot Mama Should Know."

According to Fulbright, having a baby is a time for women to be honored and praised for her efforts. But instead, many feel pressure to lose weight immediately. "Women are no longer allowed to gain weight beyond that of the baby, and if she does, she fears being seen as a failure," says Fulbright.

"Women should gain one or two pounds per week for a total of 30 pounds, but how quickly a woman loses that weight is related to whether she's breastfeeding, her activity level, and her diet and sleep schedule," says Fulbright. Sleep keeps cortisol (a.k.a., the stress hormone) levels low, which helps suppress cravings and stay trim. In fact, one Harvard University study found that women who sleep five hours or less when their babies are six months old are three times as likely to keep their baby weight six months later than moms who sleep seven hours a night. (Having a nanny also helps!)

And do husbands expect their wives to shed weight quickly? They're hardly immune to the images of a sexy Halle Berry hitting the red carpet weeks after giving birth. "The good news is, guys aren't comparing their wives to celebrity moms," says Fulbright. "Sure, they drool over eye candy, but they're just thinking, 'She looks good.' Most don't relate those images to reality."

"The bottom line is, unless you have the funds to afford the luxuries celebrities have, you shouldn't worry about losing all of your weight right away," says Fulbright. "Most women take a year to get back to their pre-pregnancy state anyway. In the meantime, proper nutrition, sleep, and exercise will help your body return to its pre-pregnancy state."

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- [American Pregnancy Association](#)
- [Mayo Clinic](#)