

Post-Maternity Wear

By Laura Laing

Special to the Jewish Times

A new mom spends a lot of time getting to know her baby. She also spends a lot of time getting to know a life of spit-up, sleep deprivation and often a very different body. A comfortable, practical and flattering wardrobe can help ease that transition from pregnancy to motherhood.

Davi Scheinker of Lutherville knows this better than most. With four children—14 and nine years old, and seven-month-old twins—she’s had several post-maternity wardrobes.

For her the key point is really the most obvious: “You’re not pregnant any more.” While it’s tempting to continue wearing maternity clothes or choose boxy outfits that cover up new curves and unshed baby weight, Mrs. Scheinker reaches for jeans and A-line tops.

“Your breasts are bigger, which makes your waist look smaller,” she says. “Jeans are flattering on the legs.”

Shirah Kreis, owner of **tummiesmaternity.com**, a local online maternity and post-maternity clothing store, advises new moms to be realistic with size. “Everybody has the urge to get back into regular clothes. I wouldn’t go overly big, but look for things that fit properly.”

Mrs. Scheinker agrees. “To me, wearing bigger clothes makes you look bigger,” she says. “It makes you look square.”

A yoga teacher, Mrs. Scheinker often hangs out in stretchy pants and exercise tops. “In yoga clothes, I feel comfortable,” she says.

“To me, wearing bigger clothes makes me feel bigger.”

— Davi Sheinker

Her friend Tracee Fruman of Owings Mills is also devoted to comfort. She has two boys: Jacob, who is three years old, and Leo, who was born last May.

“Having kids is all about practicality and comfort, because you can’t run after a toddler or [take care of] an infant and worry about the outfit getting messed

up,” she says. “The first time around I knew that comfort was key. I literally lived in Old Navy gaucho pants for the first month.”

But heading back to work can present a challenge. An attorney with the Maryland Office of the Attorney General, Mrs. Fruman must have a professional wardrobe. During the week, she chooses separates and button-down shirts that will allow her to use a breast pump at her office.

“You need to be able to pump without getting undressed,” she says. “I do have some dresses in my wardrobe, but I save those for days when I’m working half day.”

Nursing- and pumping-friendly clothes are important even for stay-at-home moms. “You just don’t always want to have everything hanging out there,” Mrs. Fruman says.

Thankfully, nursing wear has changed considerably over the last several years, Ms. Kreis says. “They used to really look like nursing tops,” she says. “You could tell a mile away. Now they’re cute styles, but they happen to be designed for nursing.”

Fruman likes to keep her stomach covered while nursing, so she found tank tops with straps that unsnap. But it’s the bra that really matters.

“Never underestimate the value of a good nursing bra,” she says.

Mrs. Kreis admits that bras can be challenging to fit online, so she offers fittings at her home office. “Nursing bras do run very differently according to brand and cut,” she says. There are countless styles to choose from, including underwire, sports, sleeping and even pumping bras. Some adjust up to two cup sizes, allowing for fluctuations in breast size as mom gets her pre-pregnancy body back.

Fumbling to unhook the nursing panel while holding a hungry baby can be a real challenge. So Ms. Kreis suggests nursing bras that can be easily unhooked with one hand.

“It’s important to find a bra that is comfortable and fits you well,” Mrs. Sheinker says. “I tried to find a brand that worked for me and stuck with it.”

A practical wardrobe is important, but clothing can also boost mom’s mood. “Women need



Josh and Davi Sheinker and their twins

PHOTO JUSTIN TSUCANAS

choices,” Mrs. Sheinker says. “They don’t want to wear sweats all the time.” She spent a little extra on a pair of jeans in a larger size. “Putting together something nice makes you feel good.”

Ms. Kreis sells cocktail dresses and even mommy-and-baby, matching pajamas. But cost is a factor for many women.

“Don’t spend too much money on your post-baby wardrobe, because you don’t know how much your body is going to change,” Mrs. Fruman says. “You don’t want to spend a lot of money on clothes that will get stretched out from nursing or spit up on.”

The fashion industry has responded to this concern by developing transitional clothing—outfits that can be worn at the beginning of the pregnancy and after the baby is born. “Now a lot of maternity wear is nursing friendly,” Ms. Kreis says, including V-necks that can be pulled down.

With a new baby and a new day-to-day life, fashion choices may be the last thing on a mother’s mind. But a simple and flexible wardrobe can help even the most frazzled and overwhelmed mom feel confident and independent. □

Laural Laing is a local free-lance writer.



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