Deb's Page

You Look Marvelous

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Abstract

In this column, the author is reminded that maternity fashion and her own sense of clothing styles often leave much to be desired.

Journal of Perinatal Education, 13(3), 61–62; humor, maternity fashion.

DOI: 10.1624/105812404X1806

Some of you are the enduring fashion types. You wear classic styles in neutral palettes. You look sensible. Some of you haven't changed your wardrobe or hair-style much at all since high school. You look comfortable. I, however, fall prey to trends and colors that blow in and out of fashion with the wind. I am drawn to colors so bright, they practically glow. According to my children, my "look" is one red nose short of a clown.

Most mornings, I greet my children in the hall outside the bathroom. We exchange greetings, give one another a head-to-toe glance, and are each probably thinking about the other, "Are you going to wear *that*?" The chasm between today's fashions and those of my generation is especially apparent in maternity fashions—or lack of them! Even though I regularly see young couples in my childbirth education classes, it was in another setting that I was most aware that times have changed.

My husband and I were visiting my son's high school. The guidance counselor who greeted us appeared to be 37.4 weeks gestation. I could determine this because her t-shirt dress was so taut against her abdomen, Leopold's maneuver wouldn't be needed to

determine fetal position. She looked adorable, but I was reminded of my favorite maternity outfit. It was a billowing cotton ducky print, with satin ribbon tied neatly in a bow under the tidy white collar. Younger readers might do well to picture a walking, pleated tablecloth, sort of gift wrapped at that. Very sexy.

The guidance counselor directed us to a pleasant young man whose pants were barely covering his backside. Gulp. He was the English teacher. Ushered into an empty classroom, I wedged my own backside into a student desk. Gulp, again. Suddenly, I was overcome with the fear of never prying that chair off my hips. I had visions of making my way through the halls and running into our son with the desk permanently wrapped around my hind end.

We did run into my son as we were leaving. Thank goodness the chair and I had parted. Whew! I had

spared him any embarrassment. Or so I thought. Over dinner that evening, we discussed the day's conversation with his teacher. My son had one and only one question for me: "Why did you have to wear that hippie dress?"

Editor's Note

Deb travels nationally, presenting keynote speeches for perinatal practitioners. For booking information, call 800-682-2347 or visit www.debgauldin.com. Deb's CDs and tapes contain songs about pregnancy, childbirth, and the adjustment to parenthood. They are available through Lamaze International (800-368-4404).

The Potential Risks of Fetal Ultrasound Keepsake Videos

Recent reports in the medical literature suggest that an increase in the number of ultrasound examinations during pregnancy may restrict fetal growth and that prenatal ultrasonography may be associated with delayed speech in children. Other experimental studies have reported adverse effects (lung hemorrhage) in animals resulting from ultrasound exposure. Ultrasound use continues for nonmedical reasons (e.g., "keepsake" videos or live model ultrasound modeling). These issues support the need for continued research in the area of ultrasound bioeffects.

Xenobiotic-induced alteration in genetic expression is thought to represent early subcellular perturbations that may eventually lead to overt toxicity. This has lead many investigators to suggest that the detection of altered gene expression, in response to physiological stress, may be a useful and sensitive biomarker to toxicity. In collaboration with investigators from Children's National Medical Center, studies were initiated using the chick embryo model to evaluate potential ultrasound bioeffects. Studies were conducted using heat as a positive control to determine the "thermal dose" required for the developing chick embryo to induce stress proteins. Qualitative and quantitative changes in embryonic gene expression were determined by SDS-PAGE. Several proteins have been identified via immunochemical analysis using antibodies specific for stress proteins and glucose-regulated proteins. Preliminary studies have been conducted using ultrasound. Temperature measurements have been made at various intensity/exposure durations and the altered expression of stress proteins has been detected. Preliminary data suggests that ultrasound can induce stress proteins in chick embryos and that these effects are not mediated by heat. Bioeffects data generated from this research project will be useful in responding to new, evolving safety issues and aid in risk assessment activities regarding ultrasound exposure.

(Source: OBGYN.net. Retrieved July 1, 2004, from http://www.obgyn.net/fm/fm.asp?page=/fm/news_articles/fda_ultrasoundequip0304)