A Guide to Buying Maternity Clothes by Jane Jones

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Congratulations-- you're having a baby! Once a woman confirms she's pregnant, one of the first things she looks forward to is wearing maternity clothes. It's only natural to want to show off that bump, but you also want to do it in style and comfort. Clothing takes on a whole new meaning when you're pregnant-- not only do you want to look good and feel sexy as your belly grows, but being comfortable is more than just a nicety-- it's vital. Use this guide to help you purchase maternity wear that will take you through your pregnancy in style and comfort.

Maternity Clothes Staples

Just as any wardrobe should have basic essentials on which to build outfits, you need some maternity wear staples you can mix and match throughout your pregnancy to keep you comfortable and stylish. A few of your maternity wear essentials can change depending upon the season in which you're pregnant, but since you'll be pregnant through nearly three seasons, the following staple items can help you build a versatile supply of maternity clothes.

â€¢ Short or Long-Sleeve T-Shirt- select a stretchy cotton that expands with your growing belly

â€¢ Tank Top- great for warm weather or layering

â€¢ Dressier Shirt- choose a button-down shirt or blouse for work or dressy occasions

â€¢ Cardigan- a wrap-style cardigan works well for the entire pregnancy and can be worn with any outfit

â€¢ Jeans- buy jeans in the same style you normally wear (such as boot cut). Choose the panel style that is most comfortable for you (see below for more information on panels).

â€¢ Khakis- a great in-between pant style for when jeans are too casual and dress pants are too dressy

â€¢ Dress Pants- black pants especially will go with everything

â€¢ Dress- classic black or another solid color can be worn while relaxing around the house or when you head out

Panels or No Panels

A choice of three panels can be confusing-- what's the difference between them and why do they matter? A panel can provide support for your belly and stetches as you grow. Try on pants with different panels so you can decide if you want panels in your maternity wear or no panels.

Full Panel- covers your entire belly and wraps around the waist for support. Perfect for the 2nd and 3rd trimesters.

Demi Panel- has an elastic band approximately three inches wide in a low-rise style. Works well for the entire pregnancy and post-pregnancy.

No Panel- regular closure at the front and elastic band at the back, no elastic panel. Best for 1st and 2nd trimesters.

Underneath It All

Proper support underneath your maternity clothes is very important. Your bra size can grow several sizes over the course of your pregnancy. Plan to buy a couple bras early in your pregnancy and maybe one or two more later on. A good-fitting bra does more than make your maternity clothes look good; it provides essential support as your bust line expands.

Things to Remember

Buy the same size clothing you would normally wear. Don't size up to accommodate your growing belly. Maternity clothing will do that for you.

Later in your pregnancy you'll appreciate pants and tops that slip-on easily.

Your feet can expand during your pregnancy, too. When shopping for maternity clothes, don't forget about your feet-- take a look in the shoe department, too.

Shopping Tips

Shopping for maternity wear should be enjoyable. Go shopping when you're well-rested. Make sure bathrooms are readily available, as well as a place to sit and enjoy a snack. Bring along a friend or family member to help you carry your clothing items or retrieve other sizes for you. When you start to feel tired, either take a break or call it a day. Pushing yourself is likely to result in sore feet and back, a tired body, and a miserable end to your maternity wear shopping trip.

Don't worry about buying an entire wardrobe of maternity clothes as soon as you find out you're pregnant. Start with one great outfit that makes you feel good. Add more maternity wear throughout your pregnancy, if you like, and focus your enjoyment on your pregnancy and the precious gift that's about to enter your life.

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This guest article was written by Jane Jones from the a maternity clothes shopping website Live Love Maternity, giving some advice on buying a maternity wear.

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