Parents.com Offers Professional Photography Tips for Taking Winning Pregnant Belly Pictures for Best Baby Bump contest

Five secrets for taking great pregnant belly photos - from little baby bumps to big pregnant bellies - and expert advice from maternity photographers on the best poses.

New York, NY (PRWEB) August 20, 2008 -- Parents.com, the online home of American Baby, Family Circle, and Parents magazine, today offered five professional photography tips for taking winning pregnant belly pictures to upload to its Best Baby Bump Contest. In addition to sharing five secrets for taking great pregnant belly photos - from little baby bumps to big pregnant bellies - Parents.com also shared advice from top maternity photographers on the best poses.

Liz Zack, Executive Editor of Parents.com, says, "We collected top tips from the pros on how to take the very best pregnant belly pics. In addition to gathering the 5 secrets to beautiful pregnant belly photos, we also polled our expert maternity photographers about their favorite poses."

The Best Baby Bump Contest started June 27, 2008, and ends September 30, 2008. Photos must be .jpeg or .bmp image formats and cannot exceed 3 MB. Photos must be original, unpublished and may not have won any prize or award. Entries must be received at http://www.parents.com/bump-contest by 11:59 p.m., E.T., on September 30, 2008.

Here are 5 secrets to beautiful pregnant belly photos:

1. Wait until you're big, but not too big:
You want your belly to be big and beautiful, but you don't want it to be so large that posing and holding different positions for any length of time becomes taxing. Professional photographer Mariah Milan Dagupion suggests taking photos right around 30 weeks. That's when your belly gets really round, she says, but it's not too heavy yet. Of course each pregnancy and pregnant belly is different so use your own stamina as a guide.

2. Avoid background clutter:
Just like professional photographers, style your backdrop. So think about what's behind you. When choosing your location, avoid standing in front of a messy living room - or worse, a messy bathroom. Instead, lie mermaid-style on a solid-color couch or tape some ironed white sheets to the wall and--voila--an instant studio backdrop. Or change things up and step outside: Pick a tranquil spot in your backyard or nearby park or beach to set up camp. We love the leaning-up-against-a-tree look, or, if you're at the beach, try a profile shot, where you're sitting up and looking out at the sea.

3. Turn off the flash:
The on-camera flash will be a total wash-out. Maternity photographer Ashley McNamara suggests standing right in front of an open door or window to get great natural light instead. If you're shooting outside avoid midday sun. "The best times to go outside are early in the morning or an hour or two before sunset when there's that golden, sun-tanned, highlights-in-the-hair light," Dagupion says.

4. Wear something tight and stretchy:
The whole point of the shoot is to see the gorgeous belly, right? Tight, stretchy clothes will best accentuate all your great curves.

"Never wear maternity clothes," Hart says, since their primary objective is often to feel good on, rather than flatter your shape. McNamara recommends trying some fitted Gap or Old Navy tank tops in solid colors instead.

"Skip the florals, plaids, and checks," maternity photog Koren Reyes stresses. "You want to be able to look back at these pictures in 10 or 20 years and still think the photos look great. Whereas really stylized clothes can get dated, solid darks and neutrals are timeless."

Alternatively, skip clothes entirely. "I have a set of sheer curtains from Target, and I use one panel to wrap the breasts and another panel to wrap the belly," McNamara says.

5. Find a great photographer:
You want someone you feel comfortable with and will have fun around taking your picture. If your husband fits the bill, ask him to take the pics (and also to haul any extra props or equipment). Or plan a fun photo date with one of your girlfriends.

Poses to Try:
Here are a few of our expert maternity photographers favorite poses:
* Close up on the belly
* You lying on your back on a couch.
* Older sibling kissing the belly
* You holding older sibling (so they're sitting on the belly facing you)
* Sitting Indian style, facing the camera
* Working the S curve (one hip out, one shoulder high, one shoulder low, hands relaxed. Think, supermodel!)
* Profile shot
* Any yoga poses you know (and can get into easily)
Zack adds, "Show us your gorgeous belly! Enter your best big, beautiful belly pics in our Belly Photo Contest now for the chance to win $2500."

About Parents.com:
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