

## Uncomfortable and uninviting moments for a pregnant are overwhelming

A word of caution. If you are visibly pregnant, your body is public property. Prepare yourself for groping, touching and fondling--and I'm not talking about the kind of stuff that got you into this situation in the first place. I'm talking about random strangers accosting your stomach. It could happen at any time. Anywhere. That little, old lady in the checkout line at the grocery? She looks innocent enough, but just give her a minute, and she'll be molesting your belly. A former coworker you haven't seen in years? Run into her at the bank, and she'll be patting your tummy before you can cry out, "Stranger danger! My body belongs to me!"

There seems to be something about the pregnant stomach that attracts. It's like a cute, wiggly puppy—people can't help but swoop down and give it a little love pat. Except it's not a cute, wiggly puppy, it is a stomach, MY stomach,



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and I can't help but feel a little uncomfortable when random strangers pat my stomach. Think about it—if that lady in the checkout line attempted to caress my non-pregnant belly, I'd likely call security.

Friends and family, fine. One girlfriend of mine particularly loves feeling the baby move, and I'm happy to oblige. It's fun to see her face light up when she feels an elbow or a knee evidence itself from inside my abdomen. Especially since my husband is skeeved out by pregnancy and never attempts to feel the baby move unless I force him into it. At which point he will shudder like he has the willies and say some-

thing like, "It's an alien!" No, he is not one of those guys you see on "A Baby Story" who smooches his wife's pregnant stomach and says things like, "You're glowing!"

So there are moments when it is appropriate, and even welcome, to touch a pregnant stomach. But those moments are few, and they generally involve an invitation.

It doesn't stop with stomach-patting, though—strangers love to comment on the size of a pregnant woman's belly. Heck, EVERYONE enjoys commenting on the size of a pregnant woman's belly. Why is that? Why is it acceptable to say to a pregnant woman, "Wow, you are HUGE!" or, "You look like you're about to pop"? But you would never say those things to, say, the UPS delivery guy. People, really. Nobody likes being compared to a balloon, pregnant or not. And when one is hormonal and bloated and being pummeled from the inside by a mammoth-sized baby, the last thing one

wants to be told is that one is "huge." Hippos are huge. Elephants are huge. Donald Trump's hair is huge. I, on the other hand...OK, fine, I'm kind of huge at this point, but for the love, is it necessary to point that out to me?

Call me oversensitive if you will, but there is an enormous child living in my stomach and displacing my liver and perpetually elbowing me in the spleen, so I'm feeling a little vulnerable these days. And none of my clothing fits except one pair of ratty yoga pants and some old T-shirts of my husband's, and my feet are swollen, and my toenails need to be painted, but I can't reach them anymore to do it. So please, person I've never met before, have pity on me. Don't insist that I must be carrying twins haha-hahahaha. And don't molest my belly. My unborn child, he's working on his black belt, and he might just karate chop you if you don't watch out.