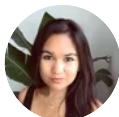


IT'S GIVING LIFE

Why More and More People Are Wearing Makeup While Giving Birth

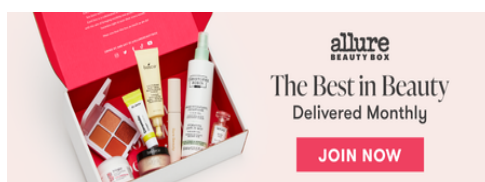
Full glam? For a C-section? TikTok says yes, absolutely.



BY AUDREY NOBLE
January 3, 2023



One might assume that going full-glam would be the last thing on someone's mind as they bring a human life into this world. But it's even more common than you (and definitely I) might think — and it's growing in popularity (again). Thanks to everyone's favorite source of information and inspiration — TikTok — a trend that it would have been fair to assume was dead seems to be on the rise again: birthing makeup.



Birthing makeup is exactly what it sounds like, and it's not a totally new concept. (You can't blame social media for everything.) It wasn't uncommon in the 1950s and early 1960s as housewife culture motivated women to look completely "done up" in everything they do. (Watch this [classic scene](#) from *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* for a visual.) In modern times, celebrities and [royals](#) have been known to primp pre- and post-delivery for photo opps. Makeup artist and founder of [Jamie Makeup](#) Jamie Greenberg did a whole [YouTube tutorial](#) on the best makeup to wear when in the delivery room back in 2016. "My client, [actor] Ashley Jones, was pregnant at the time and she asked me about products I'd recommend for delivery room makeup," Greenberg tells *Allure*. "I thought it would be a great topic for a video so we got together to talk about it."

But it's a topic that can incur swift online backlash, with many deriding celebrities and royals for focusing on their appearance during such a physically and emotionally intense time. Others challenge that notion, though, and argue that incorporating makeup into the birthing experience can be empowering and something to lift the mood of those giving birth.

Now, a single TikTok titled "[I Did My Makeup Before Birthing My Baby](#)" has close to 13 million views, and that's just one of the thousands of videos showing new parents putting on makeup in their hospital beds in the maternity ward. [Liesel Teen](#), BSN, RN, a labor and delivery nurse and founder of online birth education site [Mommy Labor Nurse](#), estimates that around 30 to 40 percent of those giving birth arrive at the hospital with at least some makeup on, with those who have planned [C-sections](#) or inductions more likely to be made-up than those who are in spontaneous labor. "When a person has a planned C-section or induction, they often have time to get do their hair and makeup, if they would like."

But why? Why are there many new parents putting extra effort into their appearance during one of the most physically intense experiences a human being can have?

Meet the Experts:

- **Stephanie Hack**, MD, board-certified obstetrician and gynecologist and host of **Lady Parts Doctor podcast** based in Maryland
- **Liesel Teen**, BSN, RN, labor and delivery nurse and founder of online birth education site **Mommy Labor Nurse**
- **Lauren Demosthenes**, MD, board-certified obstetrician and gynecologist and senior medical director at University of South Carolina's School of Medicine Greenville
- **Jamie Greenberg**, celebrity makeup artist and founder of **Jamie Makeup**
- **Donni Davy**, lead makeup artist on *Euphoria* and founder of **Half Magic**
- **Bobbi Brown**, makeup artist and founder of **Jones Road Beauty**

It's largely about the keepsake photos...

The modern human never seems to be far from a camera lens, even in the birthing room. **Lauren Demosthenes**, MD, a board-certified obstetrician, gynecologist and senior medical director with **Babyscripts** (a virtual healthcare platform with resources for new parents) says that photographing birth is now so popular that some people bring in professional photographers to document the experience instead of just family members. Teen agrees, and says this motivates people to want to look put together. "Their delivery pictures are ones that they will hopefully cherish for the rest of their lives," she says. "A lot of them want to look at those pictures and be happy with how they looked."

...which end up on social media.

All experts we spoke to agree that **social media** has had the biggest impact on making birthing makeup a trend once again.

"In our social media culture, every milestone moment — even ones that are supposed to be a surprise — are now prepared for," says **Bobbi Brown**, makeup artist and founder of **Jones Road Beauty**. Brown's three sons are now adults and when she gave birth, her makeup prep was just moisturizer and lip balm to keep her skin comfortable. "My own first post-birth photos are more photo-journalistic than they are beauty spreads," she says. That's not to say there was no aesthetic planning involved. Brown opted to prepare for the big event with the beauty services she knew she wouldn't have time for once she had a newborn. This included getting her hair colored, a mani and pedi, and bikini wax.

It gives people power and control.

On a more psychological and emotional level, birthing makeup can be a **form of self-care** for some. Dr. Hack says that putting on makeup or even something as simple as taking a shower can lift someone's spirits in those early hours of labor. "Giving birth is not the easiest experience, so the little bit that you

can do for yourself before devoting 24/7 to your new baby can be the dose of positive energy that you need," says Dr. Hack. "Birthing makeup makes you feel and look your best — or as best as you could."

There is some research to support this. When used as a creative outlet and form of human connection, makeup can increase self-esteem and foster an environment of self-acceptance, according to **some studies**. "Wearing makeup is such a simple act that can really boost a [person's] mental strength and confidence to carry through those tough labor hours," says Teen.

Lead makeup artist on *Euphoria* and founder of **Half Magic Beauty Donni Davy** agrees, and adds that if makeup is a form of your own personal self-care, you should have no qualms about doing it whenever you want to lift your spirits. "Whether that means shaving your legs [or] putting on your power-shade of lipstick, doing anything that makes you feel lovely before you give birth it is a self-affirming act," Davy says.

Davy said she considered doing a full face when she gave birth to her first child earlier this year, in order to feel like a "powerful version" of herself. In the end, though, she pivoted to styling her hair for a softer statement. "Instead of doing my makeup on the day, I decided to French braid my hair so that it would be out of my face, and so that I'd have mermaid waves when I took the braids out." The only makeup she used: clear brow gel. "When my brows are lifted, my mood is lifted," she says. Davy adds that if she decides to have another baby, she'll consider some graphic glitter eyeliner at the hospital to make an even more meaningful first impression. "In retrospect, I wish I did one of my pink shampoos and wore something colorful on my eyes so my baby could have been greeted with more color when he looked up at me during those first couple of days," she says. "Even if it would have been blurry to him." Teen also says putting on makeup can be a way of passing the time. Labor can last hours (or even days) and, before contractions get too intense, makeup can be a fun distraction.

In short: do whatever the hell you want.

Doing what's right for you is more important than trying to please others when you're giving birth. Birthing makeup gets the most criticism when it becomes less about what you want to do and more about living up to an impossible standard. "[Birthing parents] should be doing whatever is going to make them feel most comfortable," says Hughes. "They shouldn't give in to pressure to do one or the other."

But if it *is* something that you are keen on doing, there are a few things to note. Birthing makeup looks range from simple to glam, with Teen saying the most popular products she's seen used in the delivery room are mascara and **lip gloss**. Dr. Hack says that she's seen everything from a full face to only lash extensions. She adds that wearing makeup on your face is perfectly safe during and after the birthing process. The only thing the medical professionals want you to avoid is fake nails — they can interfere with hospital equipment like oxygen monitoring devices.

And what about the beauty professionals? Hughes would rather you avoid applying face makeup such as **foundation**, powders, and **blush** before giving birth. They can clog pores when combined with sweat (and a lot of sweat is highly likely). Reach for those products later, after your skin has cooled back down. For

the eyes, we'll just state the very obvious: **Waterproof mascara** (and eyeliner, if you so choose) is the way to go. Birthing is not just a sweaty, but also generally a teary, process.

"[People] should do what makes them feel the best," adds Teen. "Whether it's getting your **nails painted pink**, putting a full face on before their planned C-section, or wearing no makeup at all — if it makes them happy, I am all for it."

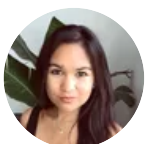
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Model Quannah Chasinghorse's 10-Minute Beauty Routine



Audrey Noble is a former digital beauty reporter at *Allure* whose writing explores beauty, culture, and entertainment, spanning topics from race and gender to celebrities and trends. In addition to holding editorial positions at *Vanity Fair*, *Refinery29*, and *Byrdie*, Audrey's work has appeared in *Vogue*, *Harper's BAZAAR*, *Cosmopolitan*, and... [Read more](#)

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MAKEUP

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BY PAIGE STABLES



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Yes, it works, and yes, my wallet is crying.

BY CHELSEA AVILA

