

Public Outrage Over Pictures of Breastfeeding

Written by [Laurel Haring](#) Sunday, October 12 2008 08:50

Last week, I wrote about the jackals of the press hyperventilating about stolen [picture of Jamie Lynn Spears breastfeeding](#) her daughter. This week in celeb news, it's all about Angelina Jolie, her partially exposed breast, and a tiny hand. Why are pictures of breastfeeding so upsetting?

As with anything involving Angelina Jolie, the press made a mountain out of a molehill. There she is, on the cover of *W* magazine, wearing an unbuttoned sleeveless top, and smiling at the camera. But wait! Could that be a tiny hand touching her breast? Could she actually be **gasp!** nursing her infant?! Horrors!

Jolie has never been one to apologize for her actions. And, in this case, there really is no need. She has twin infants who, like all infants, need to eat – even during a photoshoot.

Why the fuss?

Since the cover of the magazine proclaims that the issue features “private photos of Angelina Jolie” taken by her partner, Brad Pitt, I think that it's safe to assume that the cover photo is one of them. Since Pitt and Jolie shared the pictures with the magazine and the magazine chose to run the photo on the cover, why all the fuss?

Well, the fuss can't be because of the amount of skin that's showing. You're likely to see much more on the red carpet or even during a trip to the mall.

I can only conclude that it's that the image implies breastfeeding is occurring is what makes some people faint with shock. I guess I'm just not that easy to shock. I just don't see any cause for uproar over this modest photograph of a tired but happy mom feeding her child the way all mammals do. To me, the sight of a woman feeding her baby is one of the most natural, pure, and – dare I say it? – wholesome images of motherhood there is.

Maybe the people who object to images such as Jolie's equate breastfeeding with other, bodily functions – specifically, with bathroom bodily functions. The opinions I've seen expressed on this subject seem to run along the lines of: “I don't need to see **that**!” and “That's something that should be done in private.” To me, as long as the mom is discreet and doesn't have acres of flesh showing, it's really no one's business that she's nursing.

Another reason why people may object to these images is because they believe that breasts are purely sexual. Thus, the idea of an infant suckling at his or her mother's breast causes the brains of these individuals to read “does not compute,” and they just can't

think straight anymore. (For any of you who remember the series Lost in Space, picture the robot waving its arms while repeating, “Danger, Will Robinson!” over and over again.)

Personally, I think that the image on the cover of *W* is lovely and one to which many of us can relate. Remember those early days in our child’s lives, when we were tired, still adjusting to mothering a little one? Remember how you when you nursed your baby everything seemed right with the world, or at least your tiny corner of it? Those were the days!

So, what do you think? Is the picture of Jolie inappropriate for the cover of a magazine? Is inappropriate for public viewing? And if you think either is true, why? I ask because I’d really like to understand, not because I’d like to tell you why you’re wrong. Seems to me that there is no “right” or “wrong” here, just people’s perceptions. Let me know what you think!

Laurel Haring is a writer and editor. She and her family live in Wilmington, Delaware. While celebrity breastfeeding gives her subject matter for these articles, she really hopes that the press gives it a rest for a while. You can read more of Laurel’s writing at her Web site, [Let Me Say This About That](#).

<http://www.typeamom.net/public-outrage-over-pictures-of-breastfeeding.html>