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TRENDING

By Korin Miller

## Kendra Wilkinson Just Got Super Real About Post-Baby Belly Sag

As she showed in a really honest selfie, pregnancy can leave the skin on a woman's stomach stretched out. Doctors say it's more common than you'd think.

Two kids have left Kendra Wilkinson with excess belly skin—and she's happy to show it off. The reality star, 30, posted a photo on Instagram on Sunday of her stomach with the caption, "Look what my 2 babies did ... They made me happy. #happymothersday." Fans overwhelmingly applauded Wilkinson's move, liking the post more than 89,000 times. "Kendra is my new hero," one person wrote. "Thank you for sharing this!" another said. "Just proves famous people have human bodies, too."

Wilkinson is hardly the first woman to post photos of excess stomach skin after having a baby, and she likely won't be the last. According to social media, the post-baby condition seems incredibly common—is it?

Experts say yes. "I see this all the time," New York City dermatologist, Doris Day, M.D. tells SELF. "It's so, so common but we don't really talk about it."

Gary Goldenberg, M.D., medical director of the Dermatology Faculty Practice at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai tells SELF that there are a few reasons why it happens to some women and not others.

For starters, pregnancy is hard on your body and skin. When your skin is stretched for a period of time, it stretches the elastic and collagen fibers in the dermis (the middle layer of skin) and expands the epidermis (the outer layer of skin), he explains. That can make it harder for the skin to "snap back," especially as we get older and our skin is already less elastic. The same is true the more children a woman has.

That stretching period is also really concentrated, since Day points out that it doesn't happen over nine months—it's really more over a period of a few months when a woman's bump really shows and grows. "Your skin expands mostly in the last trimester," she says. "All of the sudden, you start to grow and your skin expands very quickly. You can expand it beyond its ability to restore itself."

Goldenberg says some of it has to do with how much weight women gain during pregnancy and where, adding that "most of it is likely genetic."

While it's hard to prevent entirely, Goldenberg recommends that his patients use a heavy moisturizer during and after pregnancy such as Vaseline, Shea butter, or vitamin E oil to try to help improve skin elasticity.

If women are bothered by their excess post-baby skin, there are a few treatments available that can help. Thermage, a radiofrequency cosmetic procedure, can help tighten the skin, Goldenberg says, and Fraxel, a laser treatment, can help diminish the appearance of stretch marks. Day also recommends Ultherapy, which uses ultrasound therapy to tighten skin. “It can take more than one treatment,” she says. “Even if it can’t cure it, it can make it better.”

David E. Bank, M.D., director of the Center for Dermatology, Cosmetic, & Laser Surgery in Mount Kisco, New York, tells SELF that regular exercise and a good diet can help a woman’s skin, too. “Much of it comes down to getting back to your normal weight and then working out and taking very good care of your skin and body,” he says. He recommends that women drink a lot of water, increase their protein intake, exfoliate in the shower, and use a collagen-based lotion post-pregnancy to help their skin bounce back.

And, if all else fails and a woman is still bothered by her excess skin, she can also have a tummy tuck.

But Day stresses that this condition isn’t unusual—and women shouldn’t freak out about it. “I tell patients who are worried about it to just have more kids and we’ll deal with it after,” she says. “This is very normal.”