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## Maternity Leave Without Kids? Here's What It Should Look Like

In a New York Post article that's recently gone viral, Meghann Foye argues for "meternity" leave (get it? me-ternity?), something she imagines has "all the perks of maternity leave -- without having kids." But her piece did get me thinking about what a "maternity leave without kids" would look like. So, I drew up a list of suggested rules guidelines, and now I think that this is a great idea.

**By Elizabeth Bromstein, Contributor**

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May 2, 2016, 10:58 AM EDT

**Updated** May 3, 2017

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ROBERT DALY VIA GETTY IMAGES Close up of woman receiving massage

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In a [New York Post article](#) that's recently gone viral, Meghann Foye argues for "meternity" leave (get it? me-ternity?), something she imagines has "all the perks of maternity leave -- without having kids."

It's a silly little article posted for the purpose of marketing her novel, *Meternity*, "... about a woman who fakes a pregnancy and discovers some hard truths about what it's really like to 'have it all.'" And it's done a fairly good job of that, I assume, since there's a lot of discussion on the subject flaring up all over the Internet.

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My favourite parts are where she argues that this is about women "putting themselves first" and that she should get both "meternity" leave *and* maternity leave if she decides to have kids later. Why not just take the rest of your life?

*Now I think that this is a great idea.*

Really though, the article isn't actually as asinine as the headline makes it seem -- she's basically arguing for paid time off to find yourself -- which you either support or you don't (but shouldn't confuse with maternity leave). And for all I know the book is awesome and insightful.

But her piece did get me thinking about what a "maternity leave without kids" would look like. So, I drew up a list of suggested rules guidelines, and now I think that this is a great idea.

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Here's how I think it should go. If you abide by these rules I see no reason why this shouldn't be a thing:

**Official rules and guidelines for maternity leave without kids:**

1. You must gain at least 30 pounds before you leave work. Half of people are required to gain twice that.
2. At the beginning of your leave, you must spend one night getting punched in the abdomen until you feel pain like you've never felt before.

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3. A random selection of people are also required to develop a wound of some sort. A sliced opening from your vagina to your anus is one option. Another is a slice through your abdomen and into your uterus. Or just stab yourself in the eye. Whatever.

4. For the first six months, whenever you try to sleep, an alarm will go off somewhere between every 15 minutes to two hours. For the second six months, that time may stretch to six hours. But who knows?

5. No sleeping between the hours of 11 p.m. and six a.m.

6. All of your non-sleeping time must be devoted to some sort of selfless service. Volunteering for a charity doing something like building houses or bathing badgers. There are no specific instructions as to how to carry out your duties in this service, and all the advice you can find online is conflicting. One thing you will know for sure is that you're probably doing everything wrong.

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7. Here's a weird thing: A bear or a cougar or something scary will be unleashed in your house and will be threatening everything you love. But you can't see it and you are the only person who knows it's there. Nobody believes you. You know you sound crazy, but IT'S THERE.

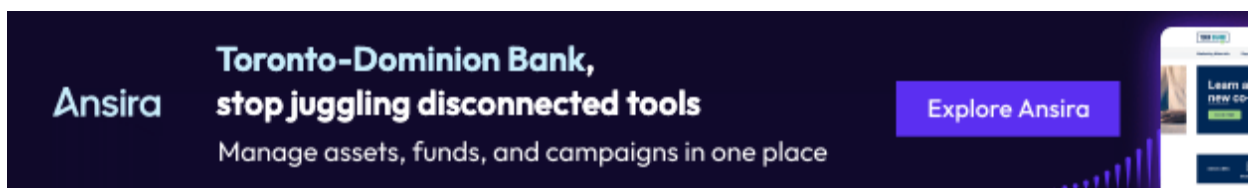
8. You must rub sandpaper over your nipples until they are red and bleeding. Once this is achieved, you are required to tug on them

15,000 times a day. You may opt out of this but you are required to feel like a terrible person.

9. You can only shower once a week, max.

10. You may wear clean clothes for 10 minutes out of the day. A bucket of vomit, pee, poop and food scraps will be provided to you from which you must splash the vomit and food on your clothes when the 10 minutes are up.

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*When you try to explain that it's not as easy as one might imagine, you'll be blasted with the argument that (again) you chose this, so it's your own fault, really.*

11. Every task you set out to do must be performed in intervals. If you are washing the dishes, you may only wash three dishes, then go bathe some badgers or build a house. Then three more dishes, then badgers (or house).

12. If you have time to exercise off the extra weight and keep a clean house, you are not doing enough selfless service and more will be assigned to you.



13. If you have a partner, no sex for the first six months.
  
14. You may not leave the house to see any friends for the first six months unless you take a badger (or a house) with you. If you take it to a restaurant, people will be assigned to look annoyed, because they don't want badgers and houses in their public spaces. If you need them to move to make room for your badger or house, they will be really annoyed. You will be expected to just suck it up because you *chose* this and you don't deserve special treatment.
  
15. You may not leave the house at night in the hours during which you are not allowed to sleep.
  
16. An assortment of assigned strangers will come up to you and tell you how to live and bathe badgers and build houses, and that you're doing it wrong. You are not allowed to tell them to eff off because that would be rude.
  
17. A government official will come to your house on a monthly basis to make sure you are feeling sufficiently isolated, overwhelmed and confused. If you are not, an additional invisible bear will be released into your home.

18. A random 10 to 15 per cent of you will be selected to suffer from severe depression and/or anxiety.

19. After a few months of this you will be required to listen to some asshole talk about how lucky you are and how they deserve the same super great privileges. When you try to explain that it's not as easy as one might imagine, you'll be blasted with the argument that (again) you chose this, so it's your own fault, really. You will want to explain that people's lives shouldn't really be broken down to those sorts of judgement calls, but you'll realize that this is so outside of the other person's realm of understanding that you won't know where to start, because you might even have thought the same thing before your own super awesome MEternity live. So, you'll just sigh and walk away. Because, forget it.

20. You can actually take more than one MEternity leave. With each subsequent leave, you must do all the same things while looking after an untrained primate of some sort -- say an affectionate but obstinate adolescent baboon, adding one additional primate per leave. So, two leaves, one baboon. Three leaves, two baboons. You must not lose your patience with the baboons. (Of course, maternity is way better *with* actual kids because kids are better to have around the house than baboons. [Or so I imagine. I've never had a baboon in my house.] But you're the one who doesn't want the kids.)



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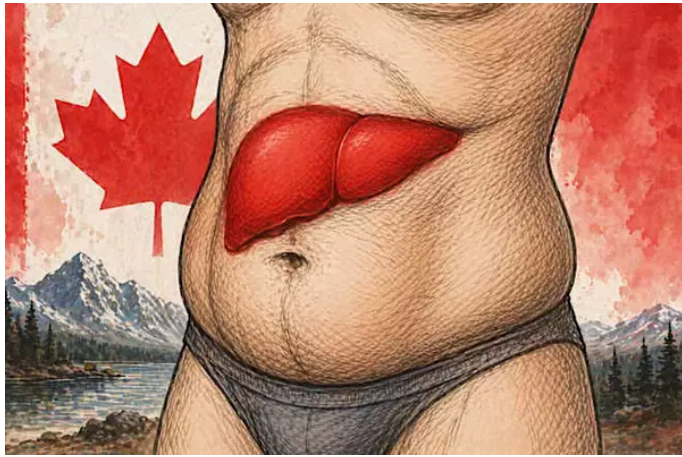
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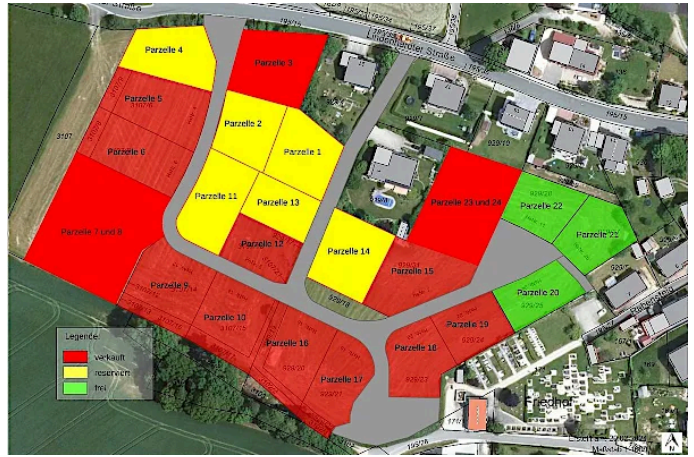
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