

Lifecasting . . . Sometimes It Is For The Faint of Heart

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Well it happened again Saturday morning just as I was finishing the application of MoldGel. My nine-month pregnant model passed out. Thankfully, I was ready. I had positioned a chair to her side in advance and had my assistant watching for signs. She and her husband had been planning to have a torso casting done for several weeks. She knew just what pose she wanted – standing with one leg crossing over the other and her arms cradling her stomach. It was an awkward pose for even an experienced model. But she insisted.

Before the session we spoke at length about the procedure and the possibility of becoming light headed and even fainting. We discussed the need to breathe naturally against the weight of the molding material. We even discussed rising up on the toes to keep the circulation moving in case she felt a bit light headed. I used the fixture I had made to keep the model off her feet. It is cushioned with foam and covered with vinyl. It is designed to lean back against my studio wall to keep much of the weight off the feet in any standing pose. What my model didn't tell me is just the week before she fainted in the subway.

Creating a lifecasting in a standing pose is tiring for a model at best. Creating a lifecasting with a model 30 pounds heavier due to a

pregnancy can be over taxing as this last one proved to be. Needless to say, the first mold was ruined. But the important thing was after the model was seated for a few seconds she quickly recovered.

Fainting is not an uncommon

occurrence and we must all be vigilant for the signs.

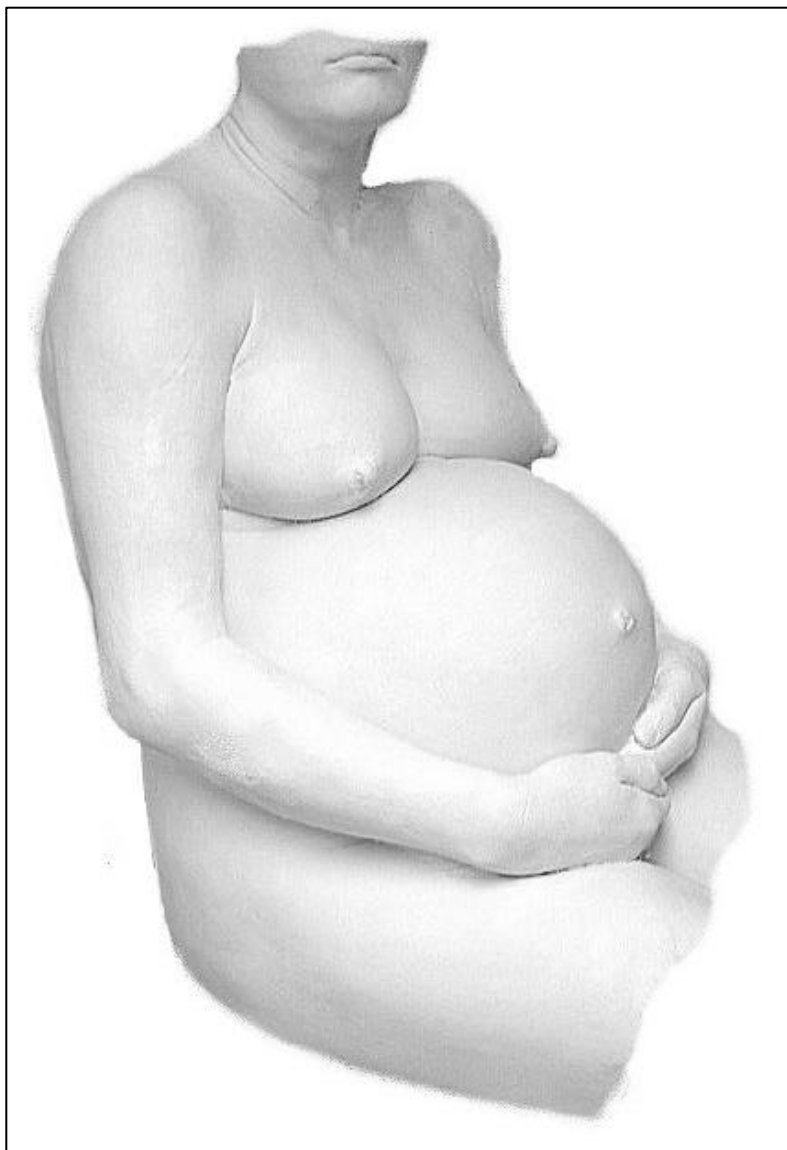
After a few minutes, she removed the MoldGel, which had set, and requested that we begin again. This time I insisted she be seated. The result was a beautiful

cast of a $\frac{3}{4}$ torso in a seated position. Though a seated pregnancy creates a bigger looking stomach by surrounding it with her arms we offset this illusion satisfactorily.

The lesson of the session was a reminder that we as lifecasting artists must always plan for the safety of the model. As a lifecaster you will experience a fainting model from time to time and it can be a scary thing if you are not prepared. The reasons for fainting are not always clear either. However, standing rigid in the same position for a period of time can cause even the strongest soldier to keel over.

A fixed standing position, the tendency for shallow breathing due to the weight of the molding material and the anxiety created in the modeling process all contribute. When the model faints it isn't just gradually – it happens all at once.

The first symptom is unusual warmth. You must keep talking with your model as to how he or she feels. Sometime the warmth is confused with the warmth of the molding



Torso casting of a pregnant model completed in the sitting position after the model fainted during a standing pose.

material. You should caution your model that he or she must report to you when they begin to feel themselves getting warmer. Such a feeling is usually followed by light-headedness, then the narrowing of the vision. When that is happening the model can no longer communicate. You must grab them under the armpits and sit them down. Forget the mold making - pull off the mold material. Just the sitting action will be enough for the model to regain control. After 2-3 minutes the model will feel normal.

The best way to avoid a fainting model is to avoid a model that may have the propensity to faint. You cannot always determine this in questioning, as you saw in this example, but here is what we do at our studio.

We ask the model if he or she has ever had any breathing problems. Have they ever passed out or fainted? Do they have any heart or other medical problems?

We try to make certain the model has much previous experience with lifecasting including full torsos and face castings.

We always have help. One person is dedicated to watching and talking to the model while the other does the molding.

We use a support fixture for the model that leans against a wall at a 45-degree angle to keep much of the weight off the models feet. We also have the model stand on a 2-inch foam board to keep the feet warm and comfortable.

It is important to have the model in and out of the mold as quickly as possible by having all materials pre measured, cut, ready and equally import sufficient back

stock also readily available in case a problem occurs in the molding.

Also some models may have a tendency to faint after the casting. So you must watch the model for at least 5-minutes after you demold.

Have cold water with a straw ready at all times and offer it frequently to your model. Have a snack and beverages ready after the model is removed from the mold.

Don't attempt to cast the head and body at one time.

Have the model read and sign a Model Release in advance of the casting session.

And most of all be sensitive to your models needs and comfort at all times.

Warmest regards,
Ed McCormick