

An Open Letter to Maternity Clothing Manufacturers

I am hoping to inspire you. Because, really, you need a little inspiration. Did you know that half of all pregnant women are plus-size? Half of the women looking for maternity clothes want something bigger than a 14. Yeah, maybe you'd better sit down.

Let's talk about availability. There is none. Do the few of you who make plus-sizes not realize that you're selling out? Or maybe you're only sending three of each size to the store? Think of the money you could make if production met demand. There are many stores that do not carry plus-size maternity clothes at all. Why are you excluding half of your target market?

Now, let's chat about cut. Are you aware that most, dare I say all, plus-size women wouldn't be caught dead in a potato sack? I know, it's hard to wrap your mind around it, but we like clothes that fit. It would be nice if the arm holes in a maternity top were not large enough to drive a UPS truck through. And really, the sleeves do not need to completely cover our fingers. A pair of pants without huge baggy thighs is another great idea. Once in a while we could do with something that has an actual waist as well. And even when we are three hours away from delivering a two week overdue baby, we do not have bellies the size of yoga balls, so we don't need so much excess material.

As for price - if you can charge the same price for a size 2 as a size 14, why is a size 20 \$10 more?

If you say it's because you need to use extra material, why not remove some from the sleeves, thighs, and hemlines (don't be scared, but we do wear skirts shorter than ankle length)?

And how about a little style? We feel frumpy enough when pregnant and also do not always want to wear all black (yes, it's slimming – but I long ago realized I would never be slim). This does

not necessarily mean go with all baby pink or baby blue with gaudy slogans. And shockingly, there are plus-size women who do like hip huggers, even in pregnancy. Believe it or not, some plus-size women do love to show off their pregnancy shape and would love form fitting items.

I hope you take my suggestions to heart and are inspired to go back to the cutting board. Maybe by the time I'm pregnant again there will be something to wear.

Brette McWhorter Sember is a plus-size mom of two and the author of **Your Plus-Size Pregnancy: The Ultimate Guide for the Full-Figured Expectant Mom** and the owner of the site www.YourPlusSizePregnancy.com.