

## HEALTHY PREGNANCY

# Help for plus-size moms

Many recent studies have focused on the various risks associated with being overweight or obese during pregnancy—enough to scare any expectant mom carrying even a few extra pounds. In her new book, *Your Plus-Size Pregnancy* (Barricade Books, 2005), coauthor Brette McWhorter Sember explains that it's still very likely that you'll have a healthy, happy nine months. To protect yourself and your little one even further:

**Shop around for a size-friendly doctor.** That means one who doesn't criticize your weight or automatically categorize you as high risk (for example, by ordering multiple diabetes tests even when you have no symptoms). Unnecessary anxiety isn't healthy for expectant moms either.

**Eat healthfully, but don't diet.** Most experts recommend that overweight women (those with a BMI over 25) gain 15 to 20 pounds during pregnancy by adding 100 to 300 calories per day. Experts also recommend 30 minutes a day of light exercise like walking, but be sure to consult your doctor first.

**Ask about taking extra folic acid.** Studies show the standard 400 micrograms per day may not be enough for overweight mothers to prevent neural-tube defects.