

For Immediate Release

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Plus-Size Pregnant Women Face Unnecessary C-Sections and Epidurals

Half of all pregnant women of childbearing age are overweight or obese. Plus-size women face many hurdles in getting pregnant because of decreased fertility, but once they're pregnant, they often find that physicians don't trust their bodies to deliver vaginally. 25% of all births are done by C-section, but plus-size women are twice more likely than other women to face a surgical birth.

“Many plus-size women face labors that don't progress or large for gestational age babies that are difficult to deliver, leading to C-sections,” says Brette Sember, co-author of a groundbreaking new book, *Your Plus-Size Pregnancy: The Ultimate Guide for the Full-Figured Expectant Mom* (Barricade Book, 2005, paperback, ISBN 1-56980-290-4, \$14.95). “However, many of these women could avoid C-sections if their physicians were aware of new studies.” A key 2004 study from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill revealed that plus-size women tend to have naturally longer active labors (the time it takes to go from 4 cm dilation to 10). Plus-size moms took between one hour and one and a half hours more time to progress than women of average weight and suffered no ill effects from the time difference. Sember says, “I recommend that all plus-size women discuss this with their health care providers and get some assurances that their bodies will have the opportunity to progress through a naturally longer labor, as long as there are no warning signs.”

In addition to the C-section controversy itself, another related dispute rages over plus-size anesthesia. The same 1999 Duke University study which determined that plus-size moms are

more likely to have C-sections led to a recommendation by Duke anesthesiologists that *all* obese women be given epidurals as soon as they are admitted into the hospital, to avoid the need for emergency anesthesia later. Anesthesiologists prefer to be able to administer epidurals with no time constraint, since they may be harder to place in larger women. As a result, many women are persuaded to have epidurals they might otherwise not want.

These are just two of the examples of the biases and disregard plus-size women face during their pregnancies. *Your Plus-Size Pregnancy: The Ultimate Guide for the Full-Figured Expectant Mom* is co-authored by Sember, who is a plus-size mom, and Dr. Bruce D. Rodgers, a Maternal-Fetal Medicine Specialist, and is endorsed by the Department of Gynecology and Obstetrics at the School of Medicine and Bio-Medical Sciences, State University of New York at Buffalo. The book is filled with quotes from real plus-size women about their experiences during pregnancy, birth, and nursing. Published by Barricade Books, the book is available at local bookstores, as well as online booksellers. For a limited time, Fashion Bug is offering the book free with purchase on their web site. More information is available at www.YourPlusSizePregnancy.com. Sember is available for interviews on this important topic.