

Free Program Just for Parents-To-Be

by Catherine Towers,
Bright Words editor

First I should confess that I didn't sign up for the Healthy Mother/Baby Program until my husband and I slammed into a difficult decision about four months into our pregnancy. We talked to our doctor, read books, and researched the procedure, but still weren't confident enough to make the call.

So I dialed 1-800-862-3338 for the Healthy Mother Baby Program (HMBP) and was immediately transferred to the prenatal nurse Sally Johnson. She listened and then asked for some research time before telling me when she would call me back. Sally dug up many of the same medical studies we had, but when she started asking simple questions from the angle of what we would do with the results, the haze cleared and we knew the right choice for us.

From then on Sally checked in with us every 30 days or so. I found myself looking forward to the calls because I always felt more energized and focused after I talked to her. Every conversation included praise for the things we were doing right along with gentle and practical suggestions to make our pregnancy healthier for both the baby and me.

The HMBP sent us a book on pregnancy, two packets of information,

and sometimes brochures to follow up on conversations about specific conditions or topics. They have a free lending library of books, DVDs, and VHS tapes that you conveniently return in a postage-paid envelope. (Word to the wise, however, get on the waiting list early: My son arrived before my turn for a popular DVD.)



HEALTHY MOTHER BABY PROGRAM

ENROLL BY

TELEPHONE: 1-800-862-3338

ONLINE:

WWW.HEALTHYMOTHERBABY.COM

MAIL OR FAX IN A HEALTHY MOTHER
BABY PROGRAM SIGN UP SHEET YOU
PICK UP FROM YOUR SITE'S
PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT

MATERIALS AVAILABLE IN
ENGLISH AND SPANISH

Did I mention the \$50 JCPenney gift card that arrived after our baby was born? All this and yet only two people participated in the free and confidential HMBP last year. All Bright Wood associates are eligible and so are their spouses (even if the wife is

not covered by the company's insurance plan as long as she completes an enrollment form and provides the Personnel Department with a copy of the marriage certificate).

I suspect there are a lot more people who would have enrolled in the program if they'd known about it and understood what it could do for them. Like me you may think you have all your bases covered with a great doctor, doing everything by the book, eating right, exercising, etc., but even then having one more prenatal expert on your team can pay off.

We found that out the day I went in for a routine doctor's appointment and ended up in the hospital scheduled for an early C-section. Nurse Sally called just as my husband was about to leave for the hospital. At a time when things seemed out of our control and scary, she reassured us by pointing out that we were in one of the best facilities in the state for premature babies and that our doctor was on top of things.

I talked to Sally for the last time when our son was six weeks old. I was sad to say goodbye, but also grateful for the healthy baby boy in my arms. I knew that all her encouragement and information played a role in bringing this beautiful miracle into the world.