

A SISTA'S GUIDE FOR EXPECTANT MOTHERS

New book gives advice on pregnancy



Angela Foster

EXCLUSIVE

COUNTLESS GUIDES have been written offering tips on how expectant mums can enjoy a successful pregnancy but none specifically aimed at black women – until now.

The Mocha Manual to a Fabulous Pregnancy is a new book being hailed as a veritable black women's bible on how to have a healthy pregnancy.

The book is the brainchild of journalist and mum-of-two Kimberly Seals-Allers, a senior editor on US black women's glossy *Essence*.

She told *New Nation*: 'Black women are statistically at a higher risk than white women during pregnancy. The medical profession always thought this was due to poverty but they found that college-educated women were still having low-birth-weight babies and still four times more likely to die during childbirth.'

'I thought, how can that be that in 2006 black women are still a medical mystery? I realised that black women



Author: Kimberly Seals-Allers spent nine months on book

needed some kind of targeted help during pregnancy.'

Written with the help of medical professionals, the book provides advice on everything from staying healthy to looking stylish during pregnancy.

Seals-Allers interviewed more than 250 women whose stories

appear at the end of each chapter in the 'Mocha Mix'.

'Black women like to speak to our sister-friends,' Seals-Allers said. 'It's the first time that all these voices have been brought together.'

There are celebrity contributions from Wurling to

Esaka star Lela Rochon, who talks movingly about how she lost her first baby, and Kimora Lee Simmons, estranged wife of hip-hop mogul Russell Simmons on how she stayed looking good.

'Kimora called me at 3am from Jamaica to do the interview; she was so excited,' Seals-Allers says. 'She talks about having 50 pairs of maternity jeans.'

'And Lela was really passionate about telling women to take care of themselves, even if you have a demanding job.'

Medical conditions that particularly affect black women, including lupus and sickle cell, are also covered and there are chapters on single, aunts and mums-to-be who are over 35.

Seals-Allers says the book 'has gone down a storm. I've had so many emails from women all over the world. Black women have been reading this book. I call this book my baby because it took me nine months to write'.

The 34-year-old started her career as a business journalist and columnist on the *New York Post*. She had a stint on the business desk of *The Times* in London and it was then she met her husband Joseph, who hails from Harlesden, northwest London. The couple now live in Bay Shore, New York, with their children Kayla, six, and Jaden, two.



Kim's baby: Mocha Manual

So what was the biggest lesson she learned while pregnant? 'The art of surrender. You think you can do everything but there were days when I couldn't even get to number two on my list of things to do. I had to learn to wave my white flag and be like, OK, I am just a passenger on this train, she laughs.

She is planning further Mocha Manuals to help black women navigate their way through life, with books on surviving parenthood and babying your first house.

■ *The Mocha Manual*, published by HarperCollins, is available for www.amazon.co.uk or www.mochamannual.com. It can also be ordered at Borders bookshop.