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What NOT to Eat When Pregnant

Everything you eat and drink can affect your baby. Some foods can cause serious problems and need to be avoided. Don't be scared; be informed. By setting yourself a few simple rules about what to eat and what not to eat while pregnant, you can enjoy a safe and happy pregnancy.

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So what should you avoid, now you're pregnant?

Here's a list of things you shouldn't eat or drink while you're pregnant because they may harm you or your baby. For your own peace of mind, stay away from them. If you decide on a healthy diet from the start of your pregnancy, you won't need to worry about what to eat and what not to eat when pregnant.

Alcohol

Alcohol is absorbed quickly into your body and that of your unborn baby via your bloodstream. For some, it can also be a depressant, and slows the nervous system. If you drink heavily while pregnant, your baby could suffer from foetal alcohol syndrome (FAS), which can damage its health for life. So it's safest to say no to alcohol while you're pregnant.

Raw meat and seafood

Eating undercooked or raw meat and seafood, such as sushi, puts you at risk of listeria and salmonella poisoning, which can cause miscarriage, stillbirth or premature labour. Listeria infection can be passed onto the baby.

Deli meat, pates and meat spreads

Refrigerated meat products like pates, ham and salami may be contaminated with listeria bacteria. It's best to avoid these foods.

Raw eggs

Raw eggs and products containing them may contain salmonella. Avoid raw cake batter, raw cookie dough, homemade ice cream, custards, mayonnaise, unpasteurised eggnog or hollandaise sauce and caesar salad dressings.

Soft cheese

Avoid feta, brie, ricotta and camembert cheese, blue-vein cheese, queso blanco, queso fresco and panela as they may be contaminated with listeria. They are only safe to eat if served cooked and hot.

Precooked or pre-prepared cold foods that are not re heated

Pre-prepared cold foods like salads and quiches may be contaminated with listeria and should be avoided.

Liver in very small quantities

Although liver is a rich source of iron, it contains high levels of vitamin A. If eaten to excess, this can be harmful to your baby and lead to severe birth defects. If you wish to eat liver, it is recommended that you consume only small amounts (50g per week at the most). The recommended intake is no more than 800 micrograms/day.

Unpasteurised dairy products and soft serve ice-cream

These foods may be contaminated with listeria bacteria which can be dangerous to your baby.

Fish containing Mercury

Fish is recommended during pregnancy as it is a good source of omega 3 fatty acids which are needed for brain and nervous tissue development in your baby. However due to certain types of fish containing high levels of mercury which can be harmful to your baby you need:

1. Limit to one serve (150g) per fortnight – billfish (swordfish, broadbill and marlin) and shark (flake), with no other fish eaten in that fortnight.
2. Limit to one serve (150g) per week – orange roughy (deep sea perch) or catfish, with no other fish eaten that week.
3. Eat 2–3 serves per week – of any other fish or seafood (for example, salmon or tuna).

Caffeine

Caffeinated beverages include tea, coffee and cola drinks. The standards allow a moderate amount of caffeine (e.g. up to 2-3 cups coffee) per day while you are pregnant. Having large amounts of caffeine may make it more difficult to become pregnant and may increase the risk of miscarriage or having a low birth weight baby.

Energy drinks can contain caffeine

Caffeine and /or guarana and are not recommended during pregnancy.

If you have any concerns about the safety of your food, consult the expertise of a dietitian or your usual health care professional.

Read more ^[7]

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