

FOODS TO AVOID OR LIMIT DURING PREGNANCY

Not every food is safe to eat during pregnancy. Some foods may be harmful to you or your baby because of the way they're cooked or because of germs or chemicals they contain. Here's why:

- Raw meat, fish and eggs can contain harmful germs that can give you food poisoning, like salmonella infection. Cooking them fully kills the germs, which helps keep you and your baby from getting sick.
- Many dairy products, like milk, eggs and cheese, are pasteurized. This means they're heated to kill any bad germs. If the product label doesn't say "pasteurized," pick a different product. Unpasteurized dairy products can give you food poisoning, like listeriosis.
- Some foods contain chemicals, like caffeine or mercury. You can pass these harmful chemicals to your baby during pregnancy.

What foods should you limit during pregnancy?

These foods are OK to eat during pregnancy in limited amounts:

- **Fish that have small amounts of mercury.** Mercury is a metal that can harm your baby. Fish get mercury from the water they swim in and from eating other fish that have mercury in them. By eating fish that contain mercury, you can pass the metal to your baby during pregnancy. This can cause brain damage and affect your baby's hearing and vision. During pregnancy, eat 8 to 12 ounces a week of fish that doesn't have a lot of mercury, including shrimp, salmon, pollock, catfish and canned light tuna. It's OK to eat 6 ounces a week of albacore (white) tuna.
- **Food and drinks that have caffeine.** Limit the caffeine you get each day to 200 milligrams. This is about the amount in 1½ 8-ounce cups of coffee or one 12-ounce cup of coffee. Caffeine amounts in coffee vary a lot and depend on things, like the brand you drink, how it's made and the size of the cup. Check to see how many ounces your cup has, especially if you're buying a cup of coffee or tea. Instead of drinking regular coffee, try coffee that's decaffeinated (has a smaller amount of caffeine). Caffeine is also found in tea, chocolate, soda and some over-the-counter medicine. Read labels on food, drinks and medicine to know how much caffeine you're getting.

What foods are completely off limits during pregnancy?

Don't eat these foods during pregnancy. They can be really harmful to you and your baby.

Certain meats and Fish

- Raw or undercooked meat, including beef, poultry and pork. This includes hotdogs and deli meat (like ham or bologna).
- Raw fish, especially shellfish
- Fish that can be high in mercury, like shark, swordfish, king mackerel and tile fish. Always check with your local health department before you eat any fish you catch yourself.
- Refrigerated pates, meat spreads or smoked seafood

Certain dairy products

- Raw or lightly cooked eggs or foods made with them. This includes cake batter and raw cookie dough.
- Soft-scrambled eggs
- Unpasteurized juice or milk or any foods made with them
- Unpasteurized soft cheeses, such as brie, feta, Camembert, Roquefort, queso blanco, queso fresco and Panela

Other

- Raw sprouts, especially alfalfa sprouts
- Herbal products, like pills and teas. Herbal products are made from herbs, which are plants used in cooking or medicine. We don't know enough about herbal products to know if they're safe to use during pregnancy. So it's best not to use them while you're pregnant.
- Nonfood items, like clay, starch, paraffin or coffee grounds. Tell your provider if you crave anything like this that's not food.