

## **Foods to Avoid During Pregnancy**

### **Avoid seafood high in mercury**

Some fish and shellfish contain potentially dangerous levels of mercury. Too much mercury could harm your baby's developing nervous system. The FDA encourages pregnant women to avoid: Swordfish, Shark, King mackerel, Tilefish. Limit white (albacore) tuna to 6 ounces (170 grams) a week.

**So what's safe?** Recommended — two or three servings — of 8 to 12 ounces of seafood a week for pregnant women. Consider: Shrimp, Salmon, Pollock, Catfish, Anchovies, Trout, Cod and Tilapia.

### **Avoid raw, undercooked or contaminated seafood**

To avoid harmful bacteria or viruses in seafood:

- **Avoid raw fish and shellfish.** Examples include sushi, and raw oysters, scallops or clams.
- **Avoid refrigerated, uncooked seafood.** Examples include seafood labeled nova style, lox, kippered, smoked or jerky. It's OK to eat smoked seafood if it's an ingredient in a casserole or other cooked dish. Canned and shelf-stable versions also are safe.
- **Understand local fish advisories.** If you eat fish from local waters, pay attention to local fish advisories — especially if water pollution is a concern.

### **Avoid undercooked meat, poultry and eggs**

During pregnancy, you're at increased risk of bacterial food poisoning. Your reaction might be more severe than if you weren't pregnant but rarely will food poisoning affect the baby.

To prevent foodborne illness:

- **Fully cook all meats and poultry before eating.** Use a meat thermometer to make sure.
- **Cook luncheon meats and hot dogs until steaming hot or avoid them completely.** They can be sources of a rare but potentially serious foodborne illness known as listeriosis.
- **Avoid refrigerated pates and meat spreads.** Canned versions, however, are OK.
- **Cook eggs until yolks and whites are firm.** Avoid foods made with raw/partially cooked eggs, such as eggnog, raw batter, freshly made hollandaise sauce & Caesar salad dressing.

### **Avoid unpasteurized foods**

Avoid unpasteurized juice and soft cheeses: such as Brie, feta and blue cheese.

### **Avoid unwashed fruits and vegetables**

To eliminate any harmful bacteria, thoroughly wash all raw fruits and vegetables.

### **Avoid excess caffeine**

It is recommended that you limit the amount of caffeine in your diet to less than 200 mg a day during pregnancy: two 8-ounce cups of brewed coffee OR four 8-ounce cups of brewed tea.

### **Avoid alcohol**

No level of alcohol has been proved safe during pregnancy. The safest bet is to avoid alcohol entirely. Mothers who drink alcohol have a higher risk of miscarriage and stillbirth. Too much alcohol during pregnancy can result in fetal alcohol syndrome, which can cause facial deformities and intellectual disability. If you're concerned about alcohol you drank before you knew you were pregnant or you think you need help to stop drinking, consult your healthcare provider.