

Food Safety and Pregnancy



Whilst you are pregnant, it is important that you take extra precautions to ensure that the food you eat is safe for you and your baby's health.

Some foods are more likely to cause bacterial infections which can lead to vomiting and diarrhoea. Whilst this will make you feel uncomfortable and dehydrated, it can also affect your unborn baby's development.

So what should I avoid?

Below is a list of foods which you should avoid. Remember you should wash all fruit and vegetables well before eating.

Foods to avoid	Reasons for avoiding	Food to eat instead
<p>Raw or undercooked meat - especially rare steak, burgers, sausages and chicken.</p> <p>Cold cured meat (e.g. parma ham, chorizo, pepperoni or salami)</p>	<p>Risk of toxoplasmosis – a tiny parasite that lives in raw meat, untreated water, cat faeces and can harm the baby.</p>	<p>Well cooked meat that is cooked all the way through with no traces of pink or blood</p>
<p>Liver or liver products (such as liver sausage, haggis or pate)</p> <p>Pate – all types including vegetable pate.</p>	<p>Contains too much vitamin A – high levels of this can harm the baby.</p> <p>Risk of Listeria (a type of food poisoning).</p>	<p>Any other red meat</p> <p>Well-cooked meat that isn't pate.</p>
<p>Supplements with vitamin A</p>	<p>Contains too much vitamin A – high levels of this can harm the baby</p>	<p>Supplements specifically made for pregnant women</p>
<p>Unpasteurised milk</p>	<p>Risk of toxoplasmosis – a tiny parasite that lives in raw meat, untreated water, cat faeces and can harm the baby.</p>	<p>Pasteurised milk and yoghurt</p>

<p>Mould-ripened & blue cheeses such as Brie, Camembert and others with a similar rind, Danish Blue, gorgonzola or Chevre.</p> <p>(These cheeses are only safe to eat if cooked)</p>	<p>Risk of Listeria (a type of food poisoning)</p>	<p>Hard cheeses such as cheddar, stilton and parmesan.</p> <p>Soft cheeses made from pasteurised milk such as cottage cheese, mozzarella and cheese spreads.</p> <p>Check the label – most cheeses state if made from pasteurised milk</p>
<p>Some raw or uncooked eggs – Eggs without the Red Lion logo stamp (check cold-desserts and home-made mayonnaise)</p> <p>*Eggs with the red lion logo stamped on their shell are considered very low risk for salmonella and safe for pregnant women to eat raw or partially cooked.</p>	<p>Risk of food poisoning, i.e. salmonella</p>	<p>Eggs with the red lion stamp logo.</p> <p>Hardboiled eggs, eggs used in baking, pasteurised mayonnaise</p>
<p>Undercooked ready meals</p>	<p>Risk of food poisoning, i.e. salmonella</p>	<p>Ready meals that are reheated until hot all the way through (follow the instructions)</p>
<p>Raw shellfish such as prawns, mussels, lobster, crab and oysters</p>	<p>Risk of food poisoning, i.e. salmonella</p>	<p>All other fish types including smoked fish**</p> <p>Shellfish cooked thoroughly.</p> <p>Cold, pre-cooked prawns are fine</p>
<p>Sushi made with raw fish that hasn't first been frozen.</p>	<p>Occasionally, wild fish contains small parasitic worms that could make you ill</p>	<p>Cooking or freezing kills the worms and makes raw fish safe to eat.</p> <p>Cooked or vegetable sushi varieties</p>

<p>Swordfish, shark and marlin</p>	<p>These fish have very high mercury contents which can harm the baby's developing nervous system</p>	<p>All other fish types including smoked fish **</p>
<p>**More than two fresh tuna steaks or four medium cans (140g drained weight) of tinned tuna per week **More than two portions of oily fish a week (fresh tuna, mackerel, sardines, salmon, sea bream, sea bass, turbot, halibut, brown crabmeat or trout)</p>	<p>Too much tinned tuna or oily fish can be dangerous because of the levels of mercury and/or low levels of pollutants found in these fish. These can build up in the body over time which can affect the baby's developing nervous system</p>	<p>Although more than two portions of oily fish could harm your baby, you should eat one portion of oily fish a week as it contains Omega-3 oils which will help the baby's developing nervous system. Remember tinned tuna doesn't count as an oily fish</p>
<p>Too much caffeine – you should limit your caffeine to no more than 200mg a day (two mugs of instant coffee or two mugs of tea or five cans of cola)</p>	<p>Caffeine is a stimulant: it increases your heart rate and metabolism, which in turn affects your developing baby</p>	<p>Juice, milk, water and tea/coffee under the limit advised</p>

If you have any concerns regarding this leaflet you can speak to your midwife.

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Disclaimer
The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is in no way intended to replace professional clinical advice by a qualified practitioner.

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