



# Foods to Avoid in Pregnancy

## **Sushi, uncooked shellfish (oysters, clams, mussels)**

- Threat of E Coli, toxoplasmosis, salmonella, Hepatitis A.

## **Raw and undercooked meat (hamburger, pork)**

- Threat of toxoplasmosis and E Coli.
- Toxoplasmosis is also carried in soil, unwashed vegetables, and cat feces.
- Healthy adults do not show symptoms but toxoplasmosis can cross the placenta and cause disease in the fetus.
- E Coli is dangerous for adults and children.
- Avoid spreading fluid from packages onto other foods, cutting boards, utensils, dishes and food preparation surfaces.

## **Non-dried Deli meats including hot dogs**

- Risk of listeria (a bacteria that could cause an infection which could result in miscarriage or stillbirth).
- Hot dogs, especially straight from the package without further heating. The fluid within hot dog packages may contain more *Listeria* than the hot dogs themselves.
- Reduce risk by reheating deli meat until steaming hot.
- Wash your hands after handling hot dogs
- Dried and salted meats like salami and pepperoni are a better choice, as they generally do not support growth of *Listeria*.

## **Refrigerated type smoked seafood**

- Potential listeria contamination
- Safe if contained in cooked dishes
- Canned versions are safe to eat

## **Raw eggs**

- May contain salmonella
- Caesar salad dressing, mayonnaise, raw cookie dough, homemade ice cream and custards as well as Hollandaise sauce may be made with raw eggs.
- It is best to check with your server in a restaurant; if in doubt, avoid it!

## **Fish high in mercury**

- Fish is part of a healthy diet in pregnancy.
- There are some choices that are better than others, such as salmon, tilapia and whitefish.

## Soft cheese

- It is the safest to avoid all soft and semi-sort cheeses due to risk of listeriosis
- Feta, Brie, camembert, blue-veined cheeses, goat cheese, queso fresco, and Panela.
- Of note, if they labeled pasteurized they are likely safe but due to the soft nature of the cheese, it is still possible for listeria to grow after pasteurization.

## Refrigerated pâtes or meat spreads

- Potential listeria contamination
- Safe to eat canned or shelf-stable versions

## Liver

- Liver is a rich source of iron, but it contains high levels of Vitamin A, which can be harmful to the baby.

## Unpasteurized milk and juices

### Peanuts

- Avoid if you have a strong family history of peanut allergies.

## Caffeine

You should limit the amount of caffeine you have each day. Caffeine affects the way your body absorbs minerals such as iron and calcium. High levels of caffeine can result in miscarriage or a low birth weight baby.

Caffeine occurs naturally in a range of foods, such as coffee, tea and chocolate, and it's also added to some soft drinks and 'energy' drinks. It's important not to have more than 300mg of caffeine a day. 300mg is roughly equivalent to either:

- three mugs of instant coffee,
- three cups of brewed coffee,
- six cups of tea,
- eight cans of regular cola, or
- eight standard bars of chocolate.

## Alcohol

Pregnant women, and women who are trying to conceive, should avoid drinking alcohol and should not get drunk. Heavy drinking, during pregnancy, is associated with low birth weight, and other, more serious birth defects.

