

## pregnancy



answers



videos



blog



baby



pregnancy



pregnancy diet



foods to avoid when pregnant



print

my huggies

Week by week

Early pregnancy

Pregnancy complications

Pregnancy care

Miscarriage

Pregnancy Diet

Pregnancy and work

Maternity leave

Baby nursery

## pregnancy nutrition – foods to avoid when pregnant

During [pregnancy](#) there are various reasons to [be extra careful about what you eat](#) – it is important to know which foods are safe to eat and which you need to avoid. Some foods contain toxins which could lead to defects in your unborn baby, others contain food-borne bacteria which could weaken your immune system and cause damage to the foetus. Make sure most foods you eat are cooked and when choosing a recipe be selective about what you eat to protect your baby against harmful bacteria and damage while it's still developing.



Another important point to remember when selecting what to eat is the [nutritional value of the food](#) you are feeding your baby. Getting enough [vitamins and minerals in your daily diet](#) while pregnant such as folic acid, iron, vitamin C and vitamin A to name a few, are crucial for proper development of your baby.

There are many foods to avoid when pregnant, most doctors will advise pregnant women to stay away from certain fish, raw meats, raw eggs, soft cheeses, sprouts, pate, unwashed vegetables, and many more foods discussed below.

### Fish

Certain fish (such as shark, marlin, southern blue fin tuna, orange roughy and swordfish) contain high amounts of mercury that is accumulated in their fatty tissue – pregnant women should avoid eating large amounts to avoid neurologic damage to your growing baby. Your growing baby has a sensitive developing nervous system and while it is not clear how much seafood one would have to eat to experience harmful effects, it would be best to avoid these fish. Also other raw seafood that women should avoid altogether are oysters and uncooked sushi.

### Raw eggs

Perhaps the thought of raw eggs never crossed your mind but they can be a source of salmonella. Foods that contain raw egg include mayonnaise, caesar salads, eggnog, hollandaise and certain batters like those used for cookie dough. To reduce the risk of salmonella, remember to cook your eggs before eating them in any meal.

### Raw chicken

Raw chicken should be avoided at all times, but more so during pregnancy. Eating or coming into contact with surfaces that have had raw chicken prepared on them can transmit salmonella. Even cold chicken from the night before should be heated or cooked again to destroy any traces of salmonella.

### Raw meat

Whether it is a rare steak, or an uncooked meat dish, raw meat has the capability to cause serious damage to your unborn baby. Raw meat should be avoided when pregnant as it can cause a parasitic disease called toxoplasmosis or E. Coli infection. This can result in a potential intrauterine foetal infection. Other dangers that may result from eating raw meat are coliform bacteria and salmonella.

### Soft Cheeses

Soft cheese such as blue cheese, feta, brie, camembert, cottage, ricotta, Latin-American soft white cheeses and any unpasteurised milk or foods made from unpasteurised milk should be avoided during pregnancy as they may contain the bacteria, Listeria. This bacteria is very harmful to your unborn baby and must be avoided. While adults with Listeria quite often show no symptoms it could cause life-threatening complications to the foetus or newborn. Listeriosis has been known to trigger miscarriage, premature births and blood poisoning. It is best to avoid this food type when pregnant and consume only after birth.

### Fruit and vegetables

When buying fruit and vegetables make sure you wash them clean of any harmful pesticides and bacteria. Unwashed vegetables have the potential to transmit toxoplasmosis – a parasite that contaminates the soil. Also any mouldy fruit and vegetables should be avoided altogether.

### Other foods to avoid when pregnant

Apart from the foods listed above to avoid when you're pregnant, women should avoid raw sprouts as they have led to some incidents of salmonella outbreaks. Soft serve ice cream and a lot of deli foods can also contain Listeria, so it is important to avoid or if possible to minimise contact with this harmful bacteria. Another food item to avoid would be peanuts during pregnancy and lactation as this could reduce the chance of allergies against peanuts. Peanuts also have a type of mould called aflatoxin that could potentially be dangerous to your unborn baby.

### Food additives

Many foods are full of additives and preservatives so careful selection of packaged food in supermarkets is advised. Additives to avoid are MSG (monosodium glutamate) which could cause stomach upsets and headaches; artificial food colourings should also be avoided particularly blue 1, blue 2, green 3, red 3 and yellow 6 and Saccharin.

### Vitamins

When pregnant a woman's body may require different amounts of vitamins to support the growth of the foetus. Pregnancy causes a woman's body to experience drastic hormonal changes, this adds a lot of strain to the body and so a woman should check what types of vitamins she requires. Your doctor can recommend safe, effective pre-natal supplements that can provide you with enough vitamins to ensure healthy foetal development. Of course getting these nutrients from food is always the best option.

### Keeping the right things in mind

Foods to avoid when pregnant are actually quite varied, so it is very important that you keep a good list in your head of the foods you should avoid to ensure health development for your bub. Not only is it important to [keep a healthy diet](#) of food overall but at the same time remember not to diet or keep your weight down as eating healthy is the main priority and not dieting to keep your [weight gain](#) to a minimum.

Another thing to think about if you are eating out is to try and make sure the food is served steaming hot and not lukewarm nor cold. Also try and avoid too much fast food as they can be high in sugars and saturated fats.

Limit the intake of caffeine and forgo alcohol (it's only for a little while) as there is no safe level of alcohol consumption during pregnancy. Alcohol consumption during pregnancy has been linked to low IQ in babies, low birth weight and birth defects. It also stops the absorption of folic acid and iron and reduces the calcium in your bones.

The number one rule to remember is to eat when you are hungry. Try not to worry about your changing appetite, just take into account the above foods to avoid and try to gain weight at the recommended rate which your doctor or midwife will no doubt monitor.

Loading tip submission...

Loading tips list...

➔ back to **Pregnancy Diet**

➔ Foods during pregnancy

➔ Pregnancy eating plan

➔ Pregnancy nutrition

➔ Foods to avoid when pregnant

➔ Iodine deficiency during pregnancy

➔ Avoid during pregnancy

➔ Pregnancy and caffeine

➔ Anaemia in Pregnancy

➔ Pregnancy and herbs

➔ Vitamins and supplements

➔ Pregnancy weight gain

## Top problem areas



### Avoid during pregnancy

Interests 0 Huggies members

Now you are pregnant you will need to be mindful of how your actions can affect your developing...



### Foods during pregnancy

Interests 0 Huggies members



### Iodine deficiency during pregnancy

Interests 0 Huggies members



### Pregnancy eating plan

Interests 0 Huggies members



### Pregnancy nutrition

Interests 0 Huggies members

During pregnancy, a mother's metabolic rate increases and her body becomes much more...