



## **Foods to Avoid During Pregnancy**

**American Pregnancy Association. (2007). Foods to Avoid during Pregnancy. Retrieved on May 24, 2007 from <http://www.americanpregnancy.org/pregnancyhealth/foodstoavoid.html>**

**Eating well balanced meals is important at all times, but it is even more essential when you are pregnant. There are essential nutrients, vitamins and minerals that your developing baby needs. Most foods are safe; however, there are some foods that you should avoid during pregnancy.**

**Raw Meat:** Uncooked seafood and rare or undercooked beef or poultry should be avoided because of the risk of contamination with coliform bacteria, toxoplasmosis, and salmonella.

**Deli Meat and Hot Dogs:** Deli meats have been known to be contaminated with Listeria. Listeria has the ability to cross the placenta and may lead to premature delivery, miscarriage, stillbirth, or serious health problems for a newborn. Do not eat hot dogs, luncheon meats, or deli meats *unless they are reheated* until steaming hot.

**Soft Cheeses:** Do not eat soft cheeses such as feta, Brie, Camembert, blue-veined cheeses, and Mexican-style cheeses such as "queso blanco fresco" because it may contain the bacteria Listeria. Hard cheeses, semi-soft cheeses such as mozzarella, pasteurized processed cheese slices and spreads, cream cheese, and cottage cheese can be safely consumed

**Unpasteurized Milk:** Do not drink raw (unpasteurized) milk or eat foods that contain unpasteurized milk because it may contain the bacteria Listeria.

**Pate:** Refrigerated pate or meat spreads should be avoided because it may contain the bacteria Listeria. Canned or shelf-stable pâté and meat spreads can be eaten.

**Smoked Seafood** –Do not eat refrigerated smoked seafood *unless* it is an ingredient in a *cooked* dish such as a casserole because it may contain the bacteria listeria. Examples of refrigerated smoked seafood include salmon, trout, whitefish, cod, tuna, and mackerel which are most often labeled as "nova-style," "lox," "kippered," "smoked," or "jerky." This fish is found in the refrigerated section or sold at deli counters of grocery stores and delicatessens. Canned fish such as salmon and tuna or shelf-stable smoked seafood may be safely eaten.

**Fish with Mercury:** Fish that contain high levels of mercury should be avoided. Mercury consumed during pregnancy has been linked to developmental delays and brain damage. A sample of these types of fish include: shark, swordfish, king mackerel and tilefish.

**Fish exposed to Industrial Pollutants:** Avoid fish from contaminated lakes and rivers that may be exposed to high levels chemicals that could pose health risks. This is primarily for those who fish in local lakes and streams. Log on to <http://fwp.mt.gov/FwpPaperApps/fishing/fishconsumption.pdf> to learn about fish advisories in Montana.

**Raw Shellfish:** The majority of seafood borne illness is caused by undercooked shellfish, which include oysters, clams, and mussels. Cooking helps prevent some types of infection, but it does not prevent the algae-related infections that are associated with red tides. Raw shellfish pose concern for everybody and they should be avoided altogether during pregnancy.

**Raw Eggs:** Raw eggs or any foods that contain raw eggs should be avoided because of the potential exposure to salmonella. Some homemade Caesar dressings, mayonnaise,

homemade ice cream or custards, and Hollandaise sauces may be made with raw eggs. If the recipe is cooked at some point, this will reduce the exposure to salmonella. Commercially manufactured ice cream, dressings and eggnog are made with pasteurized eggs and do not increase the risk of salmonella. Restaurants also should be using pasteurized eggs in any recipe that is made with raw eggs, such as Hollandaise sauce or dressings.

**Alcohol:** There is NO amount of alcohol that is known to be safe during pregnancy, and therefore alcohol should be avoided during pregnancy. Prenatal exposure to alcohol can interfere with the healthy development of the baby. Depending on the amount, timing, and pattern of use, alcohol consumption during pregnancy can lead to Fetal Alcohol Syndrome or other developmental disorders. Alcohol should continue to be avoided during breastfeeding.

**Unwashed Vegetables:** Vegetables are safe to eat, however, it is essential to make sure vegetables are washed to avoid potential exposure to pesticides and toxoplasmosis. Toxoplasmosis may contaminate the soil where the vegetables were grown.