Informed Pregnancy® and Parenting Podcast
"Pregnancy Taboos" Episode

Show Notes/References

Food Consumption Tips

Foods to avoid during pregnancy include:

- Uncooked meat and fish - Uncooked seafood and rare or undercooked beef or poultry should be avoided because of the risk of contamination with coliform bacteria, toxoplasmosis, and salmonella.
- Unpasteurized food products
- Fish that is high in mercury (avoid big fish like shark, mackerel, swordfish, etc)
- Deli meats and hot dogs - Deli meats have been known to be contaminated with listeria, which can cause miscarriage.
- Smoked Seafood – Refrigerated, smoked seafood often labeled as lox, nova style, kippered, or jerky should be avoided because it could be contaminated with listeria.
- Raw shellfish
- Raw eggs - Raw eggs or any foods that contain raw eggs should be avoided because of the potential exposure to salmonella.
- Unpasteurized Milk - Unpasteurized milk may contain listeria. Make sure that any milk you drink is pasteurized.

http://americanpregnancy.org/pregnancy-health/foods-to-avoid-during-pregnancy/
http://www.cdc.gov/features/holidayfoodsafety/

Unpasteurized Cheese

Avoid soft cheeses such as: Feta, Brie, Camembert, Queso Fresco and Queso Blanco, blue cheese (unpasteurized).

Raw Egg Products

The CDC estimates 1:20,000 eggs is tainted with *salmonella* bacteria.
To be safe, resist tasting the following:

- Cookie dough made with raw eggs
- Desserts made with raw eggs: mousse, meringue, tiramisu
- Caesar salad dressing, Béarnaise sauce, Hollandaise sauce, Mayonnaise

For information about purchasing pre-pasteurized eggs go to Safest Choice – www.safeeggs.com.

Fish

FDA says ‘Raw seafood can be a source of bacteria and parasites’ and suggests that ‘pregnant women only eat fish and other seafood that has been cooked thoroughly.’

http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodborneIllnessContaminants/PeopleAtRisk/ucm312704.htm

High Risk Fish and Seafood includes:

- Any raw or undercooked fish
- Shellfish, or food containing raw undercooked seafood e.g., sashimi found in some sushi or ceviche
- Refrigerated smoked fish
- Partially cooked seafood, such as shrimp and crab
- Large fish (See below)
- Smoked Fish (lox, nova, kippered, smoked trout, whitefish, cod, tuna, or mackerel) are susceptible to listeria, which can be dangerous to pregnant women.

http://www.fda.gov/downloads/Food/FoodborneIllnessContaminants/UCM312787.pdf

Avoid High Amounts of Mercury

Mercury occurs naturally in the environment and can also be released into the air through industrial pollution. Mercury falls from the air and can accumulate in streams and oceans and is turned into methylmercury in the water. It is this type of mercury that can be harmful to a fetus and young child. Fish absorb the methylmercury as they feed in these waters and so it builds up in them. It builds up more in some types of fish and shellfish than others, depending on what the fish eat, which is why the levels vary.

Nearly all fish and shellfish contain traces of methylmercury. However, larger fish that have lived longer have the highest levels of methylmercury because they've had more time to accumulate it. These large fish (swordfish, shark, king mackerel and tilefish) pose the greatest risk. A pregnant woman can safely eat up to 12 oz. of seafood a week, so choose fish that are low in mercury: Catfish, salmon, cod, and canned light tuna.

Fish Oil

Omega 3’s are essential fatty acids that we need from our diets, however our diets are severely sufficient in Omega 3’s thus requiring supplementation.

Benefits of Omega 3s:

- Fetus - Neurological and visual development; may reduce risk of allergies.
- Mother - Thought to prevent pre-term labor, lower risk of pre-eclampsia, and deficiencies are linked to increased risk for postpartum depression. Also evidence that Omega 3 can increase breast milk supply post birth and decrease risk of depression.

http://americanpregnancy.org/pregnancy-health/omega-3-fish-oil/

The greatest source of EPA and DHA (two of the most important omega 3's) are cold water fish such as salmon, tuna, sardines, anchovies, and herring. Purified fish oil supplements are often the safest source of EPA and DHA. A high quality fish oil supplement from a reputable manufacturer delivers the health benefits of EPA and DHA without the risk of toxicity. (3rd party verification of particles per trillion).

Non-fish Omega 3 supplements are now available that are derived from natural plant source that is vegan and naturally sustainable.

Caffeine

Reduce caffeine consumption; it is argued that it is not necessary to eliminate caffeine completely. Sufficient evidence now shows that a moderate amount of caffeine is safe during pregnancy.

Numerous studies on animals have shown that caffeine can cause birth defects, premature labor, preterm delivery, reduced fertility, and increase the risk of low-birth weight offspring and other reproductive problems. There have not been any conclusive studies done on humans.

http://americanpregnancy.org/pregnancy-health/caffeine-during-pregnancy/

The March of Dimes recommends women who are pregnant or trying should limit caffeine to 200 mg per day. That's one 12-ounce cup of coffee.

http://www.marchofdimes.org/pregnancy/caffeine-in-pregnancy.aspx

Raw Juice

It is recommend to avoid unwashed fruits and vegetables. Concerns are minimized with peeled and organic produce.

- Wash food thoroughly to reduce risks
- Consume only organic produce
- Cut off bruised or damaged areas of fruit/veggies
- If juicing, drink immediately and clean machine well

Alcohol

Consumption of alcohol varies in different countries. US Government recommends no consumption of alcohol during pregnancy. We don't know what the risk limit is for alcohol consumption during pregnancy and it likely varies from individual to individual. Fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) is an irreversible condition that results from alcohol exposure during pregnancy.

When a woman drinks alcohol during pregnancy, so does her baby. The same amount of alcohol in her blood is also in her baby's blood. Although her body is able to manage alcohol in her blood, her fetus' little body isn't because his or her liver is too immature.

Alcohol can lead to have serious health conditions for a baby, called fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD). The most serious of these is fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS). Fetal alcohol syndrome can seriously harm a baby's development, both mentally and physically.

Alcohol can also cause the following problems for babies:

- Birth defects (heart, brain and other organs)
- Vision or hearing problems
- Premature births
- Low birth weight
- Intellectual disabilities
- Learning and behavior problems
- Sleep and sucking problems
- Speech and language delays
- Behavioral problems

http://www.marchofdimes.org/pregnancy/alcohol-during-pregnancy.aspx

Smoking Tobacco

Smoking tobacco is highly discouraged during pregnancy at all. It is recommended that women stop smoking prior to conceiving. Smoking cessation efforts are widely incorporated into preconception care and awareness campaigns. According to CDC and March of Dimes, smoking is harmful for mothers and their babies (unborn and after birth)

Risks include:

- Preterm labor, labor begins prior to 37 weeks of pregnancy. Preterm labor can lead to premature birth.
- Ectopic pregnancy. This is when a fertilized egg implants itself outside of the uterus (womb) and begins to grow. An ectopic pregnancy cannot result in the birth of a baby. It can cause serious, dangerous problems for the pregnant woman.
- Bleeding from the vagina
- Problems with the placenta, like placental abruption and placenta previa. The placenta grows in your uterus (womb) and supplies the baby with food and oxygen through the umbilical cord. Placental abruption is a serious condition in which the placenta separates from the wall of the uterus before birth. Placenta previa is when the placenta lies very low in the uterus and covers all or part of the cervix. The cervix is the opening to the uterus that sits at the top of the vagina.

Risks for fetus/baby include:

- Premature birth, born before 37 weeks of pregnancy. Premature babies are more likely than babies born on time to have health problems.
- Birth defects including cleft lip or cleft palate.
- Low birth weight, less than 5 pounds, 8 ounces.
- Death - miscarriage or stillbirth. Miscarriage is when a baby dies in the womb before 20 weeks of pregnancy. Stillbirth is when a baby dies in the womb after 20 weeks of pregnancy.
- Sudden infant death syndrome (also called SIDS).

http://www.marchofdimes.org/pregnancy/smoking-during-pregnancy.aspx
http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/health_effects/pregnancy/

Smoking Marijuana

There is mixed research and opinions about use of marijuana during pregnancy. Some suggest using it for morning sickness as well as other medical conditions that occur during pregnancy.

http://norml.org/about/item/breathe-push-puff-pot-use-and-pregnancy-a-review-of-the-literature

Others are opposed to marijuana use during pregnancy. According to March of Dimes, during pregnancy, using marijuana can cause problems for a baby, including: premature birth, low birth weight, which can create brain development problems.

http://www.marchofdimes.org/pregnancy/marijuana.aspx#

Sleep Positions

Sleeping on back decreases blood flow by the uterus putting extra weight on the vena cava. Typically, if the vena cava is compressed, the woman will feel dizzy or nauseated before blood flow is restricted to the baby. After 24 weeks it is recommended to sleep/lying on the left side. Avoid lying on the back to reduce risk of limited blood flow to baby.

Manicures

Chemicals in nail polish can be harmful if you're regularly exposed to them and are mostly a concern for people who work in a salon. It is recommended that salon workers wear masks.

The common chemicals are formaldehyde (used as a hardener), toluene (used as a paint thinner for better glide), and acetone (nail polish remover).

You can reduce your exposure to formaldehyde and toluene by:

- Use a nail polish that's free from toluene and formaldehyde.
- Use nail polish with formaldehyde and toluene once a week at most.
- Open doors and windows before you put on your nail polish.

- Dry the polish by stretching your arms away from your body. Blowing on your nails means that you are more likely to breathe in the fumes.

Painting

Use low VOC paint if painting and wear a mask. Avoid lead based paint completely.

Exercise

It is recommended to exercise during pregnancy. Maintain past exercise regimes, do something you have been doing, don't introduce new exercises. Keep heart rate down below 150 beats per minute.

Sex During Pregnancy

Sex is generally safe during pregnancy. Avoid sex if in preterm labor, or if you experience any of the following: an incompetent cervix, a shortened cervix, if water has broken, experienced recent bleeding during pregnancy. It is usually recommended to wait to have sex until six weeks postpartum.

Cats During Pregnancy

The concern about being around cats is the risk of toxoplasma, which is found in cat feces. Cats become infected by eating infected rodents, birds, or other small animals. The parasite is then passed in the cat's feces for as long as 3 weeks after infection; you may be exposed unintentionally by touching your mouth after changing a litter box, or while gardening without gloves.

The following helpful tips reduce risk of environmental exposure to *Toxoplasma*.

- Avoid changing cat litter. If no one else can perform the task, wear disposable gloves and wash your hands with soap and warm water afterwards.
- Make sure cat litter box is changed daily. The *Toxoplasma* parasite does not become infectious until 1 to 5 days after it is shed in a cat's feces.
- Feed your cat commercial dry or canned food, not raw or undercooked meats.
- Keep cats indoors.
- Avoid stray cats, especially kittens. Do not get a new cat while you are pregnant.
- Keep outdoor sandboxes covered.
- Wear gloves when gardening and during contact with soil or sand because it might be contaminated with cat feces that contain *Toxoplasma*. Wash hands with soap and warm water after gardening or contact with soil or sand.

Hair Color

Avoid getting hair color during the first trimester. After this time use vegetable dyes and don't let dye touch your scalp.

Hair coloring precautions:

- When possible, wait until the second trimester for hair dye, bleaching, permanents or straightening.
- Have the treatment completed in a well-ventilated area.
- Don't leave the chemicals on your head any longer than necessary.
- Rinse scalp thoroughly with water after treatment.
- Wear gloves when applying chemicals.

Air Travel

Dr. Goldberg recommends avoiding air travel after 34 weeks gestation, or 30 weeks for twins or multiples.

The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and the International Air Travel Association recommend that expecting mothers in an uncomplicated pregnancy avoid travel from the 37th week of pregnancy through birth. Avoiding travel from 32 weeks through birth is recommended for women who have complicated pregnancies with risk factors for premature labor, such as mothers carrying multiples.

Risk factors that warrant travel considerations include the following:

- Severe anemia
- Cardiac disease
- Respiratory disease
- Recent hemorrhage
- Current or recent bone fractures
- Past health conditions

http://americanpregnancy.org/pregnancy-health/traveling-during-pregnancy/
Air Travel Tips:

- Check the airline's policy about air travel during pregnancy. Guidelines for pregnant women might vary by carrier and destination.
- Choose your seat carefully. For the most space and comfort, consider requesting an aisle seat.
- Buckle up. During the trip, fasten the lap belt under your abdomen.
- Promote circulation. If possible, take occasional walks up and down the aisle. If you must remain seated, flex and extend your ankles often.
- Drink plenty of fluids. Low humidity in the cabin can lead to dehydration.

Hot Baths

While pregnant avoid submerging belly in hot water and adding hot water to keep a bath warm. Once the bath cools, get out.

According to the Organization of Teratology Information Services (OTIS), a body temperature of 101º F and above can raise concerns during pregnancy. Some studies have shown an increased risk of birth defects in babies of women who had an increased body temperature during the first trimester of pregnancy.

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) states that becoming overheated in a hot tub is not recommended during pregnancy. ACOG also recommends that pregnant women never let their core body temperature rise above 102.2º F.

Although the specific degree differs, both OTIS and ACOG attest to the concern related to hot tub use during pregnancy. Hot tubs are often factory programmed to maintain a water temperature of approximately 104º F. It takes only 10-20 minutes in a hot tub to raise your body temperature to 102º F or higher.

http://americanpregnancy.org/pregnancy-health/hot-tubs-during-pregnancy/