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No-Nonsense Guide to a Naturally Healthy Pregnancy and Baby

DR. MERCOLA



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Tips for a Healthy Pregnancy

What You Need to Know for a Happy and Stress-Free Pregnancy

Making sure that your baby gets a healthy start in life is one of your biggest priorities. That means ensuring that your nutritional intake is at optimal levels.

The purpose of this report is to provide you with the absolute best and most current recommendations that I have culled from over three decades of being involved in health care. I know it is a major challenge to sort through all the confusion, so I am going to do the hard work for you and provide some simple, practical, and solid tips for helping you to bring the healthiest child possible into this world.



I will discuss the importance of:

- Healthy daily doses of omega-3s
- Optimizing your vitamin D levels
- Regular exercise
- Eating for vitality and health
- Just saying no to vaccinations
- Removing your mercury amalgams
- Treating severe gum disease
- Minimizing pesticide exposure
- Using the safest cosmetics
- Avoiding exposure to phthalates

The Importance of Omega-3 Fats During Pregnancy

After reviewing many tens of thousands of articles on nutrition, I am convinced that the single most important dietary influence on your prenatal health is adequate omega-3 fats.¹ Most women have major deficiencies of this fat, and given the statistics, it's very possible you do too.

Omega-3 fat and its derivative, DHA (docosahexaenoic acid), is so essential to a child's development that if a mother and infant are deficient in it, the child's nervous system and immune system may never fully develop, and it can cause a lifetime of unexplained emotional, learning, and immune system disorders.

While most people are seriously lacking in omega-3s, they are overdosing on another type of fat: omega-6. The ideal ratio of omega-6 to omega-3 fats is 1:1. Today, though, most Americans' ratio of omega-6 to omega-3 averages from 20:1 to 50:1!³

It's very important to get your omega-6 to omega-3 ratio closer to the ideal 1:1. To do this, simply cut back on all vegetable oils (this includes those in processed foods, like

cookies, chips, and crackers) and get a regular supply of high-quality omega-3 fat, which I'll be telling you how to do, later on.

In the next few sections you'll learn even more reasons why omega-3s are so critical to you and your baby's health, and why I recommend that every pregnant woman maintain an optimal daily dose of omega-3s.

Omega-3s Provide Phenomenal Protection Against Prematurity

Optimizing your omega-3 intake will virtually guarantee that your baby will be full term. Prematurity is the leading cause of death during a baby's first month of life, and serious complications can occur later in life for preemies who survive.⁴ Studies show that the earlier a child is born, the higher the risk of complications, including:

- Respiratory distress syndrome
- Bleeding in the brain
- Less ability to fight off infection due to immature immune system
- Mental retardation
- Cerebral palsy
- Lung problems
- Gastrointestinal problems
- Vision and hearing loss.

The good news is that the DHA in animal-based omega-3 fats will prevent the vast majority of premature deliveries,⁵ as well as the other complications listed above.

More Omega-3 Benefits for Mom and Baby

Omega-3s contain a powerhouse of nutrients to ensure that your baby will develop properly and reach its highest potential. These nutrients help to maximize the intelligence⁷ of your child, and protect your baby from brain injuries such as autism, pervasive developmental delay, and ADHD.

Studies have shown that sufficient levels of omega-3 fats optimize brain growth in children, especially during the third trimester.⁸

And in addition, omega-3 fats have been found to be highly effective in combating cardiovascular disease and depression. When you are pregnant, your hormones fluctuate wildly. During this time, you might find yourself dealing with depression on some level.



Research has now shown that low plasma concentrations of DHA, one of the main fats in omega-3 oil, are associated with low concentrations of brain serotonin. Serotonin has a calming effect on your brain and nervous system, so it is no surprise that a lack of it caused study participants to feel depressed and suicidal.⁹

However, in a British study, researchers found that women who consumed greater amounts of omega-3 fatty acids during the third trimester were less likely to show signs of major depression during pregnancy, and for up to eight months after the birth.¹⁰

Dietary supplementation with omega-3 oil concentrates has also been shown to reduce both the progression of cardiovascular disease and related mortality, including sudden cardiac death,¹¹ so make sure you get plenty of this critical nutrient to protect you and your baby during this important time.

Another great benefit of adding omega-3 oils to your diet is that they will help prevent your child from developing diabetes later in life.¹⁸ This goes back to the role of omega-3 fats in helping you carry your baby to term. Studies show that premature babies have a greater risk of developing diabetes.

Let me also add that studies link this tendency towards diabetes to a lack of sufficient vitamin D prior to birth.

Hopefully all this has convinced you how important it is to have plenty of omega-3s in your diet so you can be amply protected against these risk factors during pregnancy.

Finding the Best Sources of Omega-3s

In past years, I have recommended that the best way to obtain your essential omega-3 fats was to consume fish, but because of the ever-increasing danger of ingesting too much mercury, my current belief is that fish should generally be avoided. The mercury contained in fish has been well documented to cause a variety of neurological birth defects.^{12,13}

Even the conservative FDA has warned that women should avoid most fish during pregnancy.¹⁴

Because of this issue, I recommend that you supplement your diet with a high quality krill oil instead.¹⁵ Krill are small, shrimp-like crustaceans that inhabit the Earth's oceans. The purest oil is made from krill that are harvested in the deep, clean waters of the Antarctic.¹⁶



The reason I prefer krill oil to fish oil is that krill oil contains potent antioxidants, whereas fish oil is weaker in antioxidant content.

The major drawback to taking fish oil is that, as you increase your intake of omega-3 fats, you actually increase your need for more antioxidants.

Why isthis?

Because fish oil is quite perishable, and oxidation leads to the formation of those unhealthy free radicals. Therefore, you need to take antioxidants to ensure that the fish oil doesn't oxidize and become rancid inside your body. But krill oil makes life simpler because you don't need to pop extra antioxidants every time you take your omega-3s.

And the essential fatty acids DHA and EPA are also present in krill oil. At one time, fatty fish like salmon was an excellent source of these fats, but because of the mercury contamination previously mentioned, as well as PCB contamination¹⁷ and other toxins, it is no longer a safe choice.

All these contaminants outweigh the benefits you could get from their omega-3 content (particularly since you can get them from krill oil, which is purified of contaminants). And please note that your prenatal vitamins do not contain one microgram of DHA!

Another healthy source for obtaining omega-3 is beef fed exclusively on grass. If you can find a local producer, it would be wise to seek out this food source.

Are Plant Sources of Omega-3 Acceptable?

It is important to note that plant-based omega 3 fats do not provide the same benefits as animal-based, because most of us can't sufficiently convert the ALA in plant-based fats to the appropriate amount of DHA that is required.⁶

Flax seeds, walnuts, and other plant sources of omega-3 should not be substituted for animal omega-3s, as you will simply not receive the same benefits because they are not metabolized as efficiently. For more information and precautions about nuts during pregnancy, please see the section titled Limit Nuts.

Add Sunshine for Optimally Healthy Baby

Without question one of the single most important strategies you can have for a healthy baby is to make sure your vitamin D level is in the therapeutic range. There is about a 90 percent chance that you do NOT have healthy vitamin D level for a variety of reasons.

If you work indoors a lot, it's likely you don't have a sufficient level of vitamin D, because sunlight is where most or all of our vitamin D comes from. Also, if you live in northern latitudes where you don't spend much time outdoors even when you aren't working, there's a good chance you may be D-deficient as well.

Your windows also screen out the vast majority of UVB rays from the light shining through, so you will NOT generate significant levels of vitamin D by sitting in front of a sunny window or in your car. There are other health benefits to this type of light exposure, but generating healthy vitamin D levels is not one of them.¹⁹

A recent study has shown that even if you live in more southern areas and spend more time outdoors, you may still be deficient in vitamin D. The study showed that adults in

southern Arizona were found to be deficient in vitamin D, particularly those with darker skin which produces less vitamin D in response to sunlight.

More than a quarter of Arizona adults who were tested had dangerously low blood levels of the vitamin.

On top of that, most people don't eat much vitamin-D rich fish, which is actually a good thing nowadays. While missing the vitamin D, you and your baby are also happily missing the high mercury levels that most fish contain,²⁰ due to the ongoing pollution of our waters.

I believe the very best way to optimize your vitamin D level is with regular exposure of large portions of your skin to the sun or a safe tanning bed. However, I realize that may be impractical for some, depending on the season and your financial situation. If that's the case for you, you can also supplement with oral vitamin D3 (cholecalciferol).



However, if you take an oral vitamin D supplement I strongly recommend that your blood levels are checked regularly. This is ideally performed by a natural health oriented physician.

It is also very important that you order the correct test.²¹ There are two tests with very similar names, so don't be confused. They are 1,25(OH)D and 25(OH)D. The correct test is 25(OH)D, also called 25-hydroxyvitamin D.

Make Sure You Use a Good Testing Lab

Recent developments in 2008 made it clear that there are irregularities in the values obtained from different testing methods. In order for the test to offer you clinically relevant results, I recommend using LabCorp.

Their radioimmunoassay (RIA) method for measuring total vitamin D levels has become the gold standard, not because it's more accurate than others, but because it's the one used in almost every major vitamin D study, on which the blood levels for clinical efficacy are based (see chart for optimal values on the next page).²²

The one caution here in the US is to be certain your test is performed at a lab like Labcorp that uses the gold standard Diasorin test for checking vitamin D levels. Due to information published by the *New York Times* about Quest labs, where they admitted to inaccurate results, I no longer recommend using them.

Vitamin D Levels 25 Hydroxy D

Deficient	Optimal	Treat Cancer	Excess
<50 ng/ml	50-65 ng/ml	65-90 ng/ml	>100 ng/ml

Add Exercise to Your Daily Schedule

Exercise should be an important part of your health routine while you're pregnant, as long as your doctor has not indicated otherwise. In fact, vigorous exercise has been shown to decrease the possibility of premature birth.²³

In a study conducted between 1995 and 1998, close to 1,700 pregnant women were questioned about their leisure activity during the three months before pregnancy, as well as during the first and second trimesters. Of the women questioned, 22 percent exercised vigorously before pregnancy -- 14 percent during the first trimester, and eight percent during the second.

Vigorous activity included jogging or bicycling at a moderate to fast pace, swimming, or aerobic, fast-paced dancing.

Women who exercised vigorously during the first trimester were 20 percent less likely to deliver prematurely, compared with those who did not. Those who reported vigorous activity during their second trimester reduced their risk of premature or pre-term birth, by 48 percent.

A later study indicated that women who exercised at the same rate throughout their pregnancies had larger placentas than their more sedentary peers. The volume of the placenta is a general marker of its ability to transport oxygen and nutrients to your baby. The study also indicated that a more intense exercise regimen may result in babies who weigh less at birth.²⁴ However, none of the babies born to women who exercised moderately or intensely through the ninth month were considered unhealthy.

These findings indicate that regular weight-bearing exercise is beneficial for both you and your baby, and that the amount of benefit varies with the timing and amount of exercise.

Eating for Two

I'm sure you have heard the term "eating for two." For many years, mothers-to-be were told that because they were pregnant, they must eat for two. But this is a very misleading statement. Some women gain far too much weight in the misguided belief that they must provide additional nutrition for their growing child.

Others may simply use this statement as an excuse to eat whatever they want. In either case, surveys now show that roughly half of all pregnant women are overweight or obese.²⁵

The truth is, obesity can wreak havoc on your health, and that havoc will extend throughout your pregnancy and affect your unborn child. The side-effects of obesity include birth defects,²⁶ infertility,²⁷ heart disease,²⁸ and much more. Studies also show that overweight or obese women have a greater tendency than normal-weight women to produce children who will also become overweight.²⁹

So it's important to your health and to your baby's to keep your weight within reasonable parameters, so you can both avoid problems down the road.

Eating the Right Foods for Baby

While it is true that we should always strive to eat properly, remember that a precious cargo – your baby -- is now sharing your food supply. His or her little body has no choice but to try to make good nutrition from whatever you eat, so it is more important than ever to choose the right foods so that your son or daughter can be assured of a strong, healthy adulthood.

In general, choose fresh, organic foods whenever possible. And eat a well-balanced diet consisting of adequate protein, healthy fats, fruits and vegetables.

Be sure to include plenty of leafy green vegetables, because they are loaded with folic acid, a B vitamin that studies have shown reduces the chance of your child being born with neural tube defects. Neural tube defects are a type of birth defect that affects the brain and spinal cord, and includes spina bifida.³⁰

You can find many good sources of locally grown organic vegetables and fruits at your neighborhood farmer's market.³¹ A good way to make sure you are eating properly is to eat according to your [Nutritional Type](#).



There are basically three [Nutritional Types](#):

- Protein
- Carb
- Mixed.³²

Protein types do better on low-carbohydrate, high-protein, and high-fat diets. Carb types normally feel best when the majority of their food is carbohydrate. However, I do not mean refined carbs, such as from commercial cakes, pies, cookies, and the like. They will only create more health problems. I am referring to healthy carbs in the form of fresh, organic vegetables and some fruit. Getting most of your carbohydrates from vegetables is very important.

And, if your Nutritional Type is mixed, your requirements are a balance between the carb and protein types.

Ascertaining whether you are a Protein, Carb, or Mixed Type will assure that you get the right balance of foods to nourish your particular metabolism. You can find out more about all of these Nutritional Types on my web site.

Are Vaccinations Really Necessary?

Many mothers may feel that vaccinations are beneficial, and without them, they or their baby might suffer harm. This is a very important part of your, and your baby's health, and I strongly encourage you to carefully research this topic before you reach any conclusions.

There is a large amount of pressure out there from "authorities and experts" who will plead with you how important they are.

However like most issues there are two sides to every story and if you fail to do your due diligence on this topic you can be in for problems with your baby that you had not planned on.

There are many resources you can review for more information. My favorite is www.NVIC.org which is one of the oldest and most reliable sources of credible and objective information on this topic.

Briefly here are some of the factors to consider.

First and foremost, many vaccines contain mercury, which has been shown, even in low concentrations, to impair energy production, impair neurotubule stability (neurotubules are essential to normal brain cell function), and activate brain free radical production, among many other destructive things.³⁸



To avoid these potentially grave effects, you'll want to seriously consider the pro's and con's of getting any type of vaccination while you are pregnant, as well as whether or not vaccinating your baby is in his or her best interest.

Your brain has one of the highest metabolic rates of any organ, and any impairment of its energy supply, especially during your baby's development, can have devastating consequences.

A study undertaken by Dr. Thomas Verstraeten, representing the CDC at that time, looked at data from the Vaccine Safety Datalink and found a significant correlation between thimerosal (*49.6% mercury by weight*) exposure in vaccines and several neuro-developmental disorders including tics, speech delays, and possibly even ADD.³⁹

Despite the evidence that vaccines contained a potent neurotoxin, and despite recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics and others that thimerosal be removed, five years after the Verstraeten study, in 2004, the CDC still insisted that there was no scientific evidence of harm from exposure to thimerosal-containing vaccines.⁴⁰

Currently, California, Delaware, Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, New York, and Washington ban thimerosal in vaccines.⁴¹

Furthermore, children in many states are mandated to have more vaccines at progressively younger ages. In the past three decades, the numbers of doses of government recommended vaccines for children and medical organizations like the American Academy of Pediatrics has tripled to 69 doses of 16 vaccines, with [48 doses of 14 vaccines targeted to children under age six](#).

Seven vaccines injected into a 13-pound, two-month old infant are equivalent to 70 doses in a 130-pound adult!

In the wake of this, Dr. Donald Miller, a medical doctor and instructor of cardiac surgery at the University of Washington School of Medicine, has suggested a better approach, what he calls a "user friendly vaccination schedule."

Dr. Miller states that the most rapid period of brain development begins in the third trimester, and continues over the first two years of life.⁴² He believes that until randomized controlled trials demonstrate the safety of giving vaccines during this time, it would be prudent not to give any vaccinations to children until they are 2 years old.

His [user-friendly vaccination schedule](#) also recommends that vaccinations, after the age of two, be given no more than once every six months, one at a time, in order to allow your child's immune system sufficient time to recover and stabilize between shots.

Remove Your Mercury Amalgams BEFORE You Get Pregnant

Please understand that if you have mercury amalgam “silver” fillings, you are dumping the mercury from your fillings into your baby. Ideally, it would be best to remove your fillings BEFORE you become pregnant. But if you are already pregnant, it is probably best not to remove your fillings until after you deliver.

However, it's important to realize that mercury vapor easily enters breast milk, so this is an ongoing issue after birth as well.

Studies have already shown that mercury in the mother can cause birth defects in her child, but the orthodox medical community has remained slow to accept this, until just recently.

The FDA reluctantly admitted last year that the mercury contained in amalgam fillings “may have neurotoxic effects on the nervous systems of developing children and fetuses.”⁴⁴



At least two studies have shown that elemental mercury accumulation within a developing baby increases with time, so that the levels of mercury in the fetal organs are significantly higher toward the end of the pregnancy than during early pregnancy.⁴⁵

It is now confirmed that mercury levels in a baby's brain reach even higher levels following birth, despite an end to exposure from the mother's mercury. Researchers think this is due to a redistribution of the mercury from the fetus' liver to its brain.

This transfer of mercury from a mother to her child has been confirmed in at least two human studies as well.⁴⁶ Another case involved a female surgeon exposed to 0.05mg/M3 mercury vapor at work, who bore a baby with severe brain damage. The baby's blood mercury was shown to be elevated.

The study stated that these levels of mercury can easily occur when a pregnant mother has a large number of dental amalgam fillings, chews gum, and is exposed to hot food and drinks.

Avoid Chewing Gum if You Have Silver Fillings

You need to beware that if you have mercury amalgams, it would be wise to avoid chewing gum, because chewing liberates mercury vapors that can deposit in your child.⁴³ You'll also want to let liquids and food cool down before eating, to limit mercury vapors.

There are some other steps that you can take to help protect your baby from mercury toxicity, and diminish possible harm. Vitamin C and selenium are both helpful when it

comes to protection from the toxic effects of mercury. For example, we know that vitamin C detoxifies oxidized fat, and that it can also protect your body against DNA damage.⁴⁷

Selenium, a trace mineral found in fish, meat, eggs, and some other foods, helps your immune system defend against viruses. Selenium has also been shown to bind with mercury, and logically, should cause it to be excreted from your body.

If you decide to take a selenium supplement, be sure to choose inorganic selenium rather than organic, since the organic form can build up in your tissues, while excess inorganic selenium is excreted automatically.⁴⁸

Both of these natural aids, as well as eating a properly balanced diet with plenty of green, leafy vegetables and fresh, organic foods, can help protect you and your baby until you deliver and are finished breastfeeding. At that time, I recommend that you have your mercury amalgams removed by a dentist licensed in mercury removal protocols.

Protect Your Child from Pesticide Exposure

Alarming statistics have been coming to light daily about the dangers of exposure to pesticides and other chemicals. A 2007 article in the *Los Angeles Times* reported that women who lived near California farm fields that were sprayed with organochlorine pesticides might be more likely to give birth to children with autism.⁵¹

The autism rate was highest for children whose mothers lived closest to the fields, while it declined as the distance from the fields increased.

Additional studies have found that exposure to chemicals has been believed to be a causative factor in miscarriages,⁵³ childhood learning problems,⁵⁴ and even fetal death.⁵⁵

This indicates how critical it is to make sure you safely dispose of any pesticides around your house so you do not come in contact with them, and preferably have someone else do it so you won't risk further exposure.

If you have a job that could potentially expose you to hazardous chemicals while you are pregnant, consider taking a leave of absence or otherwise distancing yourself from the source of the chemicals.

Dangers Lurking Inside Your Home

The previous studies just concerned chemicals *outside* your home. But with the increasing use of all types of commercial household cleansers, even your home can be an unsafe place.

A recent study involving almost 14,000 children was conducted to see if there was a link between prenatal exposure to cleaning supplies and asthma. The children in the study were followed until they reached three-and-a-half years of age. Results from the study revealed that the babies who were exposed to these chemicals most frequently, were the ones most likely to develop persistent wheezing as young children.⁵⁶

Some of the chemicals commonly used in the home by pregnant women include:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bleach• Carpet Cleaner• Dry Cleaning Fluid• Aerosols• Turpentine/White Spirit | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Air Fresheners• Paint Stripper• Paint or Varnish• Pesticide/Insecticides• Window Cleaner• Toilet Bowl Cleaners |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

So, how can you protect yourself and your baby from these dangers? Here are some guidelines:

1. The easiest way is by not introducing these kinds of chemicals into your home in the first place. Especially if you are pregnant, they could potentially be harmful to your unborn child.
2. Consider getting rid of your existing towels, sponges, rags, and other conventional tools you have already used to clean your home with, as they are some of the top sources for illness-causing germs in your home. They also do a very poor job of cleaning the biological and toxic aspects of dirt in your home.
3. Make dietary changes to strengthen your immune system, as I describe in the section, *Eating The Right Foods For Baby*.

So What Should You Use to Clean Your House?

I have discovered that a safe and inexpensive way to clean your house and to avoid the effects of harmful chemicals on your baby, is by using either vinegar alone as a cleaning agent, or with the addition of hydrogen peroxide.⁵⁷ This combination works exceptionally well both as a disinfectant and a sanitizer.

It's economical as well. For example, it only takes a half-cup of white vinegar to make a quart of this simple, all-purpose cleaner.

Other inexpensive and effective cleaners that are equally safe to use inside your home, before and after pregnancy, can be made from ingredients such as: white vinegar, baking soda, salt, and lemon juice. These items should be readily available in your kitchen or easily purchased, and have been proven effective as cleaning ingredients for generations.

There are also home cleaning “recipes” you can make that are safe to use during your pregnancy, such as those found at *ems.org*. These will help you create cleaning products that will also be environmentally safe, so they are a good investment for the future of our planet as well.⁵⁸

At this time I’m also able to offer a marvelously safe and effective solution called Greener Cleaner.

I have been using this in my home for the last year, testing it to make sure it works well. Made from naturally occurring enzymes that are known to have super powerful cleaning properties, Greener Cleaner is so safe and nontoxic you could actually eat it with no harmful side effects.

Beautify Yourself Safely

While you are being careful to protect your baby from the potential chemicals in many areas, be sure to consider the toxins in your everyday cosmetics. Over time, the chemicals in these products can impact both you and your baby’s nervous system, reproductive system, and cause other health issues.

Most cosmetics, such as hair dye, hair spray, facial make-up, and fingernail polish are composed of a dizzying array of chemical compounds.

The Toxic Chemicals Laboratory of New York State College studied many of the chemicals and found them to be mutagenic (having the ability to damage genes and chromosomes).⁵⁹



Recent studies have confirmed that these neurotoxins can easily pass through your blood and affect your unborn child. Unlike an adult, your growing baby does not have a functional blood-brain barrier to protect itself from toxic insult. This lack of a natural defense allows chemicals into your baby’s brain with the potential to cause serious harm, such as a disruption in the delicate brain growth process.⁶⁰

In another study, a University of Nijmegen, Netherlands student investigated 306 mentally retarded children and their mother’s job occupations. Results showed a 3.7 times increased risk of women cosmetologists having a mentally retarded child after being routinely exposed to hair care products or dyes during pregnancy.⁶¹

However, you can avoid exposure to these chemicals by avoiding commercial cosmetics and hair care products, and seeking out natural items from your local health food store.⁶² You can also purchase safer cosmetics online.

[Mercola Healthy Skin](#) is completely “green” as it is only one of five USDA certified organic cosmetic lines in the US.

[The Environmental Working Group](#) (EWG) also has a safe cosmetic site where you can purchase cosmetics, lotions, and other products that can keep you and your baby safe from harm.

Gum Disease and the Health of Your Unborn Baby

It's clear from numerous studies that pregnant women who suffer from dental disease have an increased risk of premature birth. One study found that the worse the gum disease is, the more likely a woman is to have a pre-term birth.⁶³ While scientists are still studying the biological mechanisms, animal research has shown that periodontal infections impair fetal growth.

So what can you do to minimize the risk?

A number of things. For example, recent studies have shown a strong correlation between increased vitamin C use and healthier gums.

In one such study, researchers analyzed the vitamin C intakes and periodontal disease indicators in over 12,000 adults, and found that patients who consumed less than the recommended 60 mg per day (about one orange) were at nearly one-and-a-half times the risk of developing severe gingivitis as those who consumed three times the RDA (more than 180 mg).⁶⁴

And in a 2005 German study, people with gum disease who ate two grapefruit a day for two weeks showed significantly less bleeding from their gums.⁶⁵

Lack of vitamin C has also been linked to premature deliveries and preeclampsia (pregnancy-induced high blood pressure, protein in the urine, and swelling due to fluid retention).^{66,67} Women with preeclampsia were found to have lower blood levels of vitamin C than women without the condition.

So my best recommendation is that you increase your consumption of vitamin C-rich foods. These include citrus fruits such as oranges and grapefruits, as well as kiwi fruit, cantaloupe, strawberries, tomatoes, cabbage, sweet red peppers, and broccoli. You should eat these foods fresh rather than canned, as canning destroys most of the vitamin C, and drastically reduces most of the other vitamins as well.

Can Plastic Hurt Your Unborn Child?

Exposure to phthalates, a chemical commonly used in plastics, could cause you to be at risk for birth defects, as well as for a shortened pregnancy. A recent study researched various chemicals, nicknamed “gender-benders,” that have been released into the

environment, and found that the chemicals are causing male animals and male humans to take on feminine characteristics.

Exposure to phthalates is extremely common among pregnant women. These chemicals are added to numerous products including moisturizers, nail polishes, hairsprays, insect repellants, and more. They are also added to plastic products such as food containers, to add flexibility. The chemicals are known to leach out of these products and into the environment.

It was previously thought that exposure to phthalates occurred primarily through ingesting contaminated foods. But researchers have now found that phthalates can be inhaled and even absorbed through your skin, significantly increasing your exposure.

There is another chemical I want to warn you about, and that is Bisphenol A, or simply BPA. This chemical is used in hard, clear plastics such as baby bottles, food-storage containers, and the lining of soda cans. Every year, over 6 billion tons of BPA are used to make polycarbonate plastics.⁷⁷



This chemical can mimic hormones and cause birth defects. BPA can leach out of plastic products into food, and it is also a danger in baby formula cans.⁷⁸ Studies indicate it can also lead to early puberty.

Yet another plastic I recommend you avoid at all cost is Teflon, also known as PFOA.

Manufactured by DuPont, this common, non-stick substance coats many cooking implements – frying pans, cooking pans, bake ware, even utensils. It is also found in anything from clothes to stain repellents, food packaging, and once again, cosmetics.⁷⁹ In addition, DuPont uses Teflon in other products such as firefighting foam and phone cables.

Teflon, or really any non-stick cookware, is perfectly safe as long as you don't heat it, but that would defeat the purpose wouldn't it? As soon as you apply heat to non-stick cookware the fluoride compounds in the finish start to volatilize into the air in your home.

This is such a pervasive chemical that Teflon now appears in people and animals worldwide -- one study even found that in 23 states, 96 percent of 598 children tested had traces of the chemical in their blood!⁸² That is why I recommend the [Mercola Healthy Chef cookware](#), which is ceramic and completely inert.

In a study conducted by DuPont itself, it was found that employees exposed to PFOA had elevated levels of total cholesterol and fats called triglycerides, which can increase the likelihood of a heart attack or stroke.⁸⁰ However, in typical fashion, common to most

companies whose products are their livelihood, DuPont denied that there was any association between exposure to PFOA and the employee's symptoms.

In infants, preliminary findings of a study at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health have linked PFOA to lower birth weights among newborns. The study sampled the blood of 300 newborns and looked at the levels of a variety of fluorinated chemicals in relation to their birth weight, head circumference, and other developmental markers.

The results?

The higher the infants' level of exposure to PFOA, the lower their birth weight and head size.⁸¹

The Environmental Protection Agency later made a statement, based on a risk assessment study done on animals, that exposure to PFOA creates a potential risk of developmental and other adverse effects, and they fined DuPont \$16.5 million for hiding data on PFOA toxicity for more than 20 years.⁸³

Other Pregnancy Do's and Don'ts

DO:

- Eat a healthy breakfast
- Get plenty of sleep
- Use probiotics
- Avoid anti-bacterial soaps
- Limit cell phone use

Start with a Healthy Breakfast

You have certainly heard the statement that breakfast is the most important meal of the day, and there's a good reason for that. According to a 1992 study, eating breakfast appears to have beneficial effects on appetite, insulin resistance, and energy metabolism.⁸⁴ Spanning eight years, this study followed the breakfast habits and risk factors for heart disease in over 2,800 adults, black and white, between the ages of 25-37.

The findings showed that obesity and insulin resistance syndrome rates were 35 to 50 percent lower among those who ate breakfast every day, compared to those who frequently skipped it. And eating a healthy breakfast makes sure that your baby is amply supplied with all the nutrients needed for proper growth and development.

So when you plan your breakfasts or other meals, make sure your baby doesn't share in any former junk food habits of yours, or be exposed to foods that can later cause

allergic reactions, diabetes, or other lifelong problems. You should therefore immediately exclude:

- Doughnuts
- Cereals
- Fruit juice
- Waffles and pancakes
- Bagels, toast, and cereals (usually even whole-grain, organic types)

While there are some people who can tolerate whole grains and even thrive on them, others cannot. It is safe to assume that you should avoid them if you:

- Are overweight
- Have high cholesterol
- Have high blood pressure
- Have diabetes
- Have food allergies to wheat, oats, rye, or other grains.⁸⁵

If one more of these factors are present, you will best be served by avoiding these foods.

However, if you are a Nutritional Type⁸⁶ that is carbohydrate-oriented (this is only one-third of people) and you don't have any of the above problems, then grains are a possible option for you.

If you abide by these guidelines, you will find that your health will improve and you will have fewer pregnancy-related problems.

Get Proper Sleep if You Want a Healthy Baby

Sleep plays as dramatic a role in your overall health as do proper nutrition and regular exercise. Without sufficient sleep, your body will be challenged to reach its optimal state of health, and your baby's wellbeing will also suffer. So getting sufficient sleep should be a priority in your life.



Lesley Stahl of *60 Minutes* talked with sleep researchers across the country and found out some interesting things. For example, you can die from sleep deprivation, just like you can die from being deprived of food, and sleep deprivation can cause changes in your brain activity similar to those experienced by people with psychiatric disorders.

Further, sleep deprivation puts your body into a pre-diabetic state, and makes you feel hungry, even if you've already eaten. Consistent sleep deprivation can also raise your blood pressure, and make you a prime candidate for a heart attack or stroke.⁸⁷

Your body depends on your biological clock (circadian rhythm) to steadily regulate your sleep/wake cycles. When this process gets thrown off balance – which is, unfortunately, very easy to do -- it can wreak havoc on you and your baby's health.

So how much sleep is enough? Sleep research indicates that if you are getting less than 6 hours a night, you are not getting enough sleep.⁸⁸

Although there is little or no data on how sleep deprivation in the mother affects her baby, since sleep deprivation affects your immune system, you can be sure that it also affects your baby's. And it is logical that when you lose sleep it can also affect your baby adversely, so to be safe, maintain good sleep habits.

Pregnant women often need several more hours of sleep during their first three months of pregnancy.⁹² A good rule of thumb to follow is that if you feel tired when you wake, you probably aren't getting enough sleep.

But don't despair. There are ways to erase that sleep debt. Here are a few tips for a better night's sleep:

- *Get to bed as early as possible.* Your adrenals, in particular, do a majority of their recharging or recovering between the hours of 11 p.m. and 1 a.m. In addition, your gallbladder dumps toxins during this same period. If you are awake, the toxins back up into your liver, which then back up into your entire system and cause further disruptions.
- *Drink little or no liquid within 2 hours of retiring.* This will reduce the likelihood, or frequency, of having to get up and go to the bathroom.
- *Avoid before-bed snacks, particularly grains and sugars.* This will raise blood sugar and inhibit sleep. Later, when blood sugar drops too low, you might wake up and not be able to fall back asleep.
- *Sleep in complete darkness, or as close as possible.* If there is even the tiniest bit of light in your room, it can disrupt your circadian rhythm and your pineal gland's production of melatonin and serotonin. There also should be as little light in the bathroom as possible, if you get up in the middle of the night.
- *Keep your feet warm.* Wearing socks to bed can keep you from waking up in the middle of the night. A study has shown that wearing socks to bed reduces night wakings because feet have the least amount of circulation, so they often feel cold before the rest of your body.
- *Keep the temperature in the bedroom no higher than 70 degrees F.* Many people keep their homes, and particularly the upstairs bedrooms, too hot.

Additionally, you'll want to avoid TV and the Internet at least 30 minutes prior to going to bed. The blue light coming from your television and computer monitor has been shown

to “power up” your brain and alter your biological clock. Be especially careful to avoid video games, because these can keep you hyper for hours after you’re done.⁹³

Use Good Bacteria to Optimize Your Intestinal Health

Probiotics could turn out to be an expectant mother’s best friend. They are referred to as “friendly” bacteria, and are responsible for a number of important biological functions. Some of these include assisting with digestion, keeping other harmful bacteria at bay, and stimulating the immune system.⁹⁵

A number of studies have proven their many health benefits. Specifically, they have been useful in the prevention or control of:

- Premature labor
- Food and skin allergies in babies
- Inflammatory bowel disease
- Recurrent ear and bladder infections
- Chronic diarrhea
- Bacterial vaginosis.

Researchers in Finland used a type of bacteria found naturally in the gut called Lactobacillus GG (Lactobacillus rhamnosus), to try to prevent allergy development in at-risk infants. This type of bacteria is a safe and effective treatment for allergic inflammation and food allergies in babies.⁹⁶

You can use fermented foods to supplement your intake of healthy bacteria, or you can take a high quality probiotic like [Complete Probiotics](#).

Avoid Anti-bacterial Soaps

Antibacterial soaps can be very hazardous to your baby’s health as well as to yours. There was much hoopla over these soaps some years ago, yet tests show that they offer little protection against the most common germs -- but more importantly, studies show they actually form a carcinogen when mixed with water.

In a study published in the March 2, 2004 issue of *Annals of Internal Medicine*, participants who used antibacterial soaps and cleansers developed a cough, runny nose, sore throat, fever, vomiting, diarrhea, and other symptoms just as often as people who used products that did not contain antibacterial ingredients.⁹⁷

Further, many traditional medical circles now accept the “hygiene hypothesis,” which centers on the idea that children need to be exposed to some bacteria in early childhood in order to strengthen their immune systems.



Children who are not exposed to common bacteria, which are wiped out by antibacterial soap, may be more prone to allergies and asthma.⁹⁸

A more critical problem however, is that antibacterial soaps contain triclosan, which can react with chlorine and form a carcinogen.⁹⁹ Triclosan, which is a widely used antibacterial ingredient in hand sterilization products, breaks down rapidly when exposed to chlorinated water, producing a number of toxic chemicals, including chloroform.

This finding was based on two studies that produced similar results, and researchers concluded that anyone using these products would be exposed to chloroform levels 40 percent higher than that found in tap water.¹⁰⁰

Another serious problem with these soaps is that they contribute to the problem of antibiotic-resistant germs; a growing threat to everyone's health.¹⁰¹ When disinfectants are used in low levels, researchers found that they actually make certain bacteria more resistant to antibiotic treatment. This is true in hospital settings, and certainly applies to the low-level disinfectants you may use around your home.

Last but certainly not least, antibacterial products are endocrine disrupters that can contaminate human breast milk, and certainly can also be absorbed through your skin.¹⁰²

Because infants are so much more susceptible to chemicals than adults, especially in utero, if you have any antibacterial soap or disinfectants in your home, please remove them to avoid harming yourself or your child.

Take Serious Precautions When Using Your Cell Phone

A study by top research scientists concluded that women who use mobile phones when pregnant are more likely to give birth to children with behavioral problems. This study included more than 13,000 children. Pregnant women using handsets only 2-3 times a day was enough to raise the risk of their babies developing hyperactivity and difficulties with conduct, emotions, and relationships when they reached school age.

The likelihood is even greater if the children themselves used the phones before the age of seven.¹⁰³

This study is far from being the first showing that the electromagnetic radiation from cell phones poses a hazard to a developing fetus. Animal studies have also shown that electromagnetic fields in that frequency range can affect their liver enzymes, glands, muscles, hormone balance, and heart and bone marrow.

In fact, the cellular stresses caused by information-carrying radio waves have been shown to cause DNA damage to the brain cells of rats,¹⁰⁴ and this means they have the potential to alter the DNA structure of a baby in utero.

Aside from the startling findings of this study, I believe that the increase in cell phone usage is also one of the primary causes of the autism epidemic.¹⁰⁵

Over 1 billion people who use cell phones on a regular basis are putting their health at risk, along with the health of their children and those waiting to be born, so be sure to keep cell phones away from your baby and other children.

The density of children's skulls is far less than adults', and their brains are more susceptible to damage from information-carrying radio waves. A child in the womb is defenseless against this damage.



Here are some tips to minimize the harmful effects of cell phones and other electrical devices on you and your baby:

- Do not use a cell phone while pregnant, and don't allow your children to use them.
- Limit the amount of time you spend on a cell phone or cordless phone.¹⁰⁶
- Use a wired headset to limit your exposure. Ideally, an air tube headset that conducts sound but prevents any radiation from traveling up the wire to your brain. Also, make sure the wire is shielded, which prevents it from acting as an antenna that could attract more information-carrying radio waves directly to your brain. Wireless BlueTooth headsets should be avoided.
- Limit your exposure to WiFi routers. Find out where they are located in your work environment and stay away from them.
- If you have any land-based (non-cellular) portable phones, do NOT use anything other than the 900- MHz phones, as the Gigahertz phones stay on continuously, blasting you with information-carrying radio waves 24/7.
- Use the speakerphone instead of putting the phone to your ear; this is probably one of the single most important steps you can take other than not using your cell phone.
- Limit calls inside buildings.
- Use your cell phone only where reception is good. If reception is poor, your phone has to work harder, and therefore emits a much stronger radiation signal.

Items to Avoid During Pregnancy

- Alcohol
- Soy products
- Caffeine
- Nuts
- Artificial sweeteners
- Fluoridated or chlorinated water.



Avoid Soy

Soy products are perhaps the most hazardous of the “Don’ts”, even when you are not pregnant. But they should be avoided as much as possible during pregnancy, because a diet high in soy during pregnancy and breastfeeding can have a subtle, but long-term impact on the development of your child.

Soybeans contain compounds called phytoestrogens or isoflavones, which have been found to produce a variety of hormonal actions within your body. These hormones can adversely influence the way your baby’s brain develops, the way the reproductive organs and cells grow, and even the way immune function develops.¹⁰⁷

Infants exposed to excess amounts of phytoestrogens in utero, or after birth in the form of soy formula, risk a variety of health complications, including early puberty, learning disabilities, and behavioral problems.¹⁰⁸ They also are at greater risk for developing severe allergies.

One study has linked soy consumption to brain damage and cancer.¹⁰⁹ For more information about the dangers of soy, including its impact on fertility and fetal development, I recommend you check out Kaayla Daniel’s excellent book, [The Whole Soy Story](#).

Caffeine Caveat

I’ve been warning about the dangers of caffeine to pregnant women for years. It has always been my position that **no** amount of caffeine during pregnancy is safe.

A recent study on caffeine conducted in 2008, shows that one dose of caffeine -- just two cups of coffee -- ingested during pregnancy, may be enough to affect fetal heart development and reduce heart function over the entire lifespan of the child.¹¹⁰ Take note: that’s the equivalent of two cups of coffee *during the entire pregnancy* – not two cups of coffee per day!

Caffeine is an addictive, stimulant drug that passes easily through the placenta to your developing baby. It is also transferred through breast milk. In babies (newborns and unborn), the half-life of caffeine is extended. It stays in your baby longer, and a developing infant has no ability to detoxify caffeine.

And never, ever – drink coffee from a Styrofoam cup. The heat draws toxic chemicals from the cup, and you will drink those along with your java.¹¹¹

Additionally, most coffee contains pesticides, something you definitely don't want in your baby. Pesticides have been linked to stillbirths and miscarriages.¹¹¹ Also remember that caffeine is not just in coffee, tea, and chocolate, but also in colas and energy drinks, and a number of other beverages. Make sure you carefully check the labels on any beverages before you buy them.

You can do your baby and yourself a favor by swearing off caffeine for your entire pregnancy. And since breastfeeding is the best start you can give your child in life, do your baby another big favor and remain off caffeine for the duration of your breastfeeding as well.

Limit Nuts

Recent research has found that regular consumption of nut products during pregnancy raises the odds of your child having asthma symptoms by nearly 50 percent.

About 4 percent of American children have food allergies, and roughly 3 million people in the U.S. are allergic to peanuts or tree nuts. It's already recommended that children under three not be given nuts or nut products, because their immune systems are still developing and may be more susceptible to allergens.

I think it's important to note that while DAILY consumption of nut products increased the odds that a child would develop asthma, the researchers did not find an association between *rare* or *regular* consumption of nuts.¹¹²

So this warning is really aimed at those of you who indulge in nut products on a daily basis.

Use Natural, Not Artificial Sweeteners

To put it frankly, artificial sweeteners are very dangerous for both you and your unborn child. I've written an entire book on the topic of artificial sweeteners, but let me take you through a brief look at these dangerous drugs posing as sweeteners.

After pouring over countless literature from the FDA, plus medical and scientific studies, I am more convinced than ever that artificial sweeteners, such as NutraSweet®



(aspartame) and Splenda® (sucralose) can ruin your health, and that you should stay away from them. They are present in numerous foods, from baked goods, to yogurt, to soft drinks.

Artificial sweeteners can cause depression, migraines, and even brain tumors.¹¹³

A seven-year study on aspartame (also known as NutraSweet® or Equal®) has linked it to high rates of lymphomas, leukemias, and other cancers in rats.¹¹⁴ The rats were given the equivalent of four to five bottles of diet soda a day for a human. The carcinogenic effect of aspartame was found at levels as low as about 20 milligrams a day for humans. This is far less than current daily limits in America, which is 50 milligrams.

And if you are using Splenda® because you think it is a safe alternative to sugar or other artificial sweeteners like Nutrasweet, then you are in for a big surprise. Splenda® is marketed as a "healthful" and "natural" product since it is derived from sugar, however, its chemical structure is very different from sugar. Sucralose is actually a chemical substance.¹¹⁵

Studies have shown its use has resulted in reduced growth rate in newborns (and adults) at levels above 500 mg/kg.day, decreased red blood cells – a sign of anemia (at levels above 1500 mg/kd/day), thyroid abnormalities, and aborted pregnancies.¹¹⁶

I think you must realize by now that having a drink or other product sweetened by one of these artificial sweeteners is just not worth the risk to your baby. Nearly every month I receive a report from someone who has had an [adverse reaction to Splenda](#). You can see many of them posted on my site.



Thankfully, there are a few really safe and natural sweeteners on the market today.

Stevia and xylitol are both tasty and healthy sweeteners that you can use instead of either sugar or artificial sweeteners. Some people have complained of a metallic, bitter taste to Stevia, but this comes from the processing method.

Check out different brands and you'll see this does not apply to all Stevia products. Stevia is currently available in the United States only as a nutritional supplement, while the FDA reviews its safety.¹¹⁷

It's ironic that although Stevia extract is approved as a food additive in a dozen countries including Japan, Brazil and China, it can only be sold in the U.S. as a dietary supplement. However, *compounds* from the Stevia plant can be legally used as a "natural" sweetener. The no-calorie sweetener Truvia is one such example.¹¹⁸

Truvia is made from two of the sweetest compounds of the Stevia plant. But this raises the question: *Is it still safe once you remove all the other compounds inherent in the original plant?* So far, no one knows. Therefore I would advise you to avoid sweeteners made from Stevia compounds such as Truvia, until its safety has been ascertained.

Xylitol is another great, all-natural sweetener made from birch trees. Xylitol has been shown to provide health benefit in more ways than just as a sweetener. According to scientific research studies, regular Xylitol consumption can result in fewer cavities, improved gum health,¹¹⁹ a reduction in nasal and sinus infections, and stronger bones.

Nevertheless, if you struggle with insulin issues, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or extra weight, I suggest you avoid sweeteners altogether. Most sweeteners can also decrease your sensitivity to insulin.

Avoid Fluoridated or Chlorinated Water

It's so very important for you to drink pure water, especially if you are pregnant. Avoid tap and distilled water, and choose spring or filtered water.¹²¹

Tap water should be avoided because it contains chlorine, arsenic, and frequently fluoride, all toxic substances that can have dire consequences for your baby and you.

Further, researchers from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the National Geological Survey have found traces of antibiotics, birth control drugs, antidepressants, and other drugs in many water samples taken across the country.

According to water quality expert Robert Slovak, from the fetus-forming stage of a child up to his or her teens, the sensitivity to the effects of toxic chemicals in water is tens of thousands of times more than in an adult. This means you should be drinking the best possible water to protect your baby, because this is where the damage begins and where it can't be reversed.

Some water has even been found to contain lead.¹²² In the early 90s, lead was an ingredient in brass. So if you happen to live in a house that still has fixtures from the early 90s, there's a very good chance they are brass. That means you could have lead leaching into your water.

Water can dissolve quite an astoundingly high amount of lead, especially if your water has certain aggressive tendencies, such as low pH and low alkalinity. So for the well being of your baby, if you have these pre-1990 fixtures, you should have your tap water tested for lead contamination. A lead test costs about \$25.



An alternative solution, if you simply have no other water option at present, would be to allow the water to run for a few moments first, which can drastically reduce the lead concentration. Until you're sure your water is safe and free from harmful contaminants, avoid tap water and find a pure source of water.¹²³

In addition, there are two other very dangerous substances in tap water you should be aware of, and these are formed by the municipal water disinfection process itself. These chemicals are trihalomethanes (THMs) and halo acetic acids (HAAs). They are called disinfection byproducts, or DBPs for short.

THMs have been linked to liver, kidney, and nervous system problems, in addition to cancer. The HAAs are primarily related to an increased risk of cancer.

So, removing fluoride, chlorine, DBPs, and some other toxic chemicals from your drinking water are critical requirements for any water, or house water filtration system, that you choose. You'll want to make sure it will adequately protect you and your unborn child from the chemicals and pollutants found in tap water.

I would not recommend distilled water as an effective form of water purification, and would not use it unless no other form of purification is available to you, and only for short term use.

Charcoal filters are another option, but make sure you read the box carefully, so you know which toxins it filters out. Make sure at very minimum it removes chlorine, fluoride, lead, mercury, and arsenic, and try to choose a filter that meets NSF/ANSI standard 53. While certainly not all-encompassing, this standard gives you some assurance that the filter will at least reduce the levels of some common pollutants.

The pros for carbon filters are that they are simple to install, relatively economical, and depending on micron level, will filter out the most deadly of contaminants, such as *Cryptosporidium* and *Giardia*.¹²⁶

The cons are that carbon filters gather the 'garbage' in your tap water, and the organic component of this garbage is quite capable of rotting. Also, carbon filters may be susceptible to mold attacks if left unused for extended periods. Further, they cannot filter out all possible contaminants, but only those they say they do.

But these filters are not totally effective in filtering out all the contaminants and carcinogens in your water that could cause you harm, so I would suggest, for the health and welfare of your baby, to only use one until you can afford a more effective option, such as a Reverse Osmosis system.

I believe the most complete and sure method for removing toxic elements in your drinking water is a Reverse Osmosis (RO) system. This system has the ability to remove both THMs and arsenic from your water, as well as chlorine, fluoride, and a wide array of other additives and contaminants. An RO system probably removes the broadest spectrum of toxins of any water system that I know of.¹²⁷

There are a number of good filters on the market but please be sure that yours is at least as good as the one on this [page](#).

This is the same technology used to make the purest bottled water, and it is the only technology capable of desalinating sea water and making it into drinking water. The units either fit on top of your kitchen counter, or you can get a unit that goes under your kitchen sink.

While RO units generally cost a bit more than most charcoal filters, the water purity makes it well worth the price.

Whatever method of filtration you use, if you store any of your water for later use, be sure to store it in either clear polyethylene or glass containers, because the one-gallon plastic (PVC) containers transfer far too many chemicals into your water.¹²⁸

Conclusion

With the epidemic of autism and other developmental disabilities, bringing a baby into this world can be a challenging experience. Hopefully the information presented in this guide will provide you with some sound principles which will help you navigate the minefields of potential factors which might complicate your pregnancy and prevent you from having the healthiest baby possible.

It is my wish that, all of these tips, plus the other information I have provided here, will help to ensure a safe and happy pregnancy for you and your baby, and will also guarantee that your child has a healthy foundation to grow to full adulthood, able to meet all the challenges that life brings.

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