

Do's and Don'ts of Pregnancy

What things to avoid when you're pregnant

When you're pregnant, there's a lot to learn about what's safe and what to avoid. Some things to try to avoid include:

- **Fish high in mercury.**
 - These include shark, swordfish, king mackerel, marlin, orange roughy, and bigeye tuna, as well as tilefish from the Gulf of Mexico.
 - It's okay to eat up to 8 to 12 ounces a week of fish that are low in mercury **or** up to 4 ounces a week of fish that have medium levels of mercury. Some fish that are low in mercury are salmon, shrimp, canned light tuna, cod, and tilapia. Some fish that have medium levels of mercury are halibut and white albacore tuna.
 - For more advice about eating fish, you can visit the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) website.
- **Raw (unpasteurized) milk and cheeses made with raw milk.** Cheeses usually made with unpasteurized milk include feta, Brie, Camembert, blue cheeses, and Mexican-style cheeses such as queso blanco.
- **Alcohol and drugs.** If you use alcohol, marijuana, or other drugs, quit or cut back as much as you can. It's safest not to use them at all. Talk to your doctor if you need help to quit.
- **Caffeine.**
 - Limit caffeine to about 200 to 300 mg per day. On average a cup of brewed coffee has around 80 to 100 mg of caffeine.
 - Be aware that many soft drinks, energy drinks, and chocolate have caffeine.
- **Tobacco smoke and vaping.** They contain harmful chemicals such as nicotine and carbon monoxide. Talk to your doctor if you need help quitting.
- **Things that can make your body too hot, such as hot tubs or saunas.** High body temperature can be harmful. Talk with your doctor before using them. Your doctor can tell you if it's safe.
- **Risky activities.** These include things like horseback or motorcycle riding, water-skiing, scuba diving, and exercising at a high altitude (above 6,000 feet). If you live in a place with a high altitude, talk to your doctor about how you can exercise safely.
- **Sources of food poisoning.** These include:
 - Raw or undercooked meat or seafood.
 - Unpasteurized juice and milk.
 - Soft cheese and cheese made with unpasteurized milk.
 - Premade deli salads such as egg, pasta, and chicken salad.

- Hot dogs and deli meats that haven't been heated to steaming.
- Raw sprouts.
- Undercooked eggs.
- Unwashed fresh fruits and vegetables.
- **Cat poop, cat litter, or outdoor soil that cats use.** These things can cause an infection that could be harmful.

- **Medicines that are not approved by your doctor or midwife.** These include over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and supplements.
- **Lead, radiation, and strong chemicals.**
 - Strong chemicals include pesticides, household cleaners, and paint.
 - Make changes at work or home to avoid these substances. If you can't, wear personal protective equipment (PPE) such as a mask, gloves, and goggles.

What's okay when you're pregnant

Going to work or school while pregnant is usually safe. If you aren't having any problems with your pregnancy, you can probably keep going until you go into labor. But if you have to be very active or do things like stand or walk a lot, talk with your doctor or midwife.

Having sex during pregnancy is okay, unless your doctor tells you not to. But how sexy you feel may be a bit different than in the past. Pregnancy may be a chance to explore new ways to feel close, new sexual positions, and new ways to communicate.

Travel during pregnancy generally is safe if you're healthy and not at risk for problems. The safest time to travel is between 14 and 28 weeks, when your risks for miscarriage and early labor are lowest. Check with your doctor before you travel.