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# Healthy Pregnancy Tips

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## Food Safety and Cooking Tips

- Always wash your hands in warm to hot soapy water before starting to cook and after using the restroom, smoking, petting an animal, changing a diaper, or talking on your cell phone, and before and after handling raw meat, poultry, or seafood.
- Keep counters, cutting boards, dishes, utensils (including knives), and cooking areas clean. Diluted chlorine bleach may be used to sanitize counters and sink. Always follow the directions on the bottle exactly as written.
- Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold until you are ready to serve them.
- After eating, store food promptly. Refrigerate or freeze foods, including leftovers, within 2 hours. In hot weather, refrigerate within 1 hour.
- If possible, place hot food in shallow containers to cool down more quickly in the refrigerator.
- Do not stack the containers in the refrigerator so that the cold air can get to the food quickly.
- There is no need to “let food cool down” prior to placing in the refrigerator. Modern refrigerators are able to efficiently cool food.
- Leftovers should be used quickly. If you don’t think this is possible, consider freezing the food for later use.
- Keep your refrigerator at 32°F to 40°F (1.67°C to 4.4°C) and your freezer at 0°F (-18°C). Inexpensive thermometers can be purchased at a discount center or grocery store.
- When in doubt, throw it out! It is not worth you and your baby getting sick.

## Meat, Fish, and Poultry

- Keep meat, fish, and poultry refrigerated until you are ready to cook it. If frozen, defrost in the refrigerator overnight on a plate or pan to prevent juices from spilling in the refrigerator. Fresh meat, fish, and poultry should be cooked within 48 hours after purchase. If not cooked, they should be frozen within 48 hours of purchase.
- Cook meat, fish, and poultry until well-done to prevent the risk of food poisoning. Check the inside cooking temperature by placing a thermometer into the thickest part of the food. Here is a list of *minimum* cooking temperatures:
- Ground beef, pork, veal, and lamb, including hamburgers: 160°F (71.1° C)
- Fresh beef, pork, veal, and lamb: 145°F (62.8°C)
- Poultry: whole, pieces (breast, thigh) ground, or stuffed: 165°F
- Fin fish: 145°F (62.8° C) or until flesh is opaque and separates easily with a fork.
- Heat luncheon (deli) meats and hot dogs until they are steaming hot to prevent food poisoning from listeria bacteria.
- Shrimp, lobster, and crabs: Cook until flesh is pearly white and opaque
- Clams, oysters, and mussels: Cook until shells open during cooking. Discard any that do not open during cooking.
- Scallops: Cook until flesh is milky white, opaque, and firm

## Eggs

- Eggs should be stored inside the refrigerator, rather than in the door, to keep them at 40°F (4.4°C). Cook eggs until the yolk is hard or, if scrambled, until no longer runny.
- Raw eggs or foods containing raw eggs like raw cookie dough should be avoided.
- Pasteurized shell or liquid eggs are a safe choice.

## Dairy

- Unpasteurized cheeses should be avoided. These include Mexican soft cheeses, feta cheese, brie, Camembert, and blue veined cheeses like Roquefort.
- Avoid unpasteurized milk and cheese made from unpasteurized milk

## Fruits and Vegetables

- Wash all fruit and vegetables.
- Use only pasteurized juices and ciders.
- Avoid raw sprouts.

## Cooking and Meal Tips for Iron Absorption

- When cooking or sautéing meat or vegetables, use a cast iron pan, if possible. The iron from the pan will mix into the food.
- Serve foods like tomato-based salsa or tomato-based sauces with meats (for example, meat sauce made with tomato sauce and spaghetti). The vitamin C from the tomato products will help you better absorb the iron from the meat.
- If you eat fortified cooked or ready-to-eat cereal for breakfast, drink a glass of orange juice or a vitamin C-enriched 100% fruit juice. Again, the vitamin C will help with iron absorption.
- Snack on dry, ready-to-eat cereal. The cereal is higher in iron than other snack foods like chips and crackers.

## Shopping Tips to Keep You and Your Foods Safe

- If possible, shop early in the day to avoid crowds to prevent excessive standing and prevent perishable foods from being in your cart for too long. Shopping more frequently will decrease time spent in the store as well.
- Eat prior to shopping to help prevent you from becoming nauseated in the store. Bring a snack such as crackers or fresh fruit, for example, a banana or an apple.
- Make a grocery list to help you remember the things you need. If you always shop at the same store, write your list based on how the aisles are organized to decrease time spent in the store.
- When shopping, select dry, canned, and unrefrigerated packaged foods and supplies first. Then visit the produce and bakery sections. Select dairy products, fresh meats, and frozen foods last.
- Use label reading tips to help guide healthy purchasing.
- Once you are done shopping, go straight home and store food immediately. Do not make other lengthy stops on your way home.

## Environmental Contaminants

- Mercury is an environmental contaminant that is found in high concentrations in some foods and can impair fetal growth and the developing infant brain. Foods that contain high concentrations of mercury should be avoided such as shark, swordfish, king mackerel, and tile fish (for example, golden snapper or golden bass).
- In general, cooked or canned seafood should be limited to 12 ounces per week. For tuna, the average weekly consumption should not exceed 6 ounces.
- Fish oil supplements should be avoided.

## Helpful Resources

### *Government Websites*

- Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010 <http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2010/dietaryguidelines2010.pdf>

- WIC Works: Fit WIC

<http://wicworks.nal.usda.gov/sharing-gallery/fit-wic>

- US Food and Drug Administration: How to understand and use the nutrition facts label  
<http://www.fda.gov/Food/IngredientsPackagingLabeling/LabelingNutrition/ucm274593.htm>

- Keeping Bag Lunches Safe

<http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/safe-food-handling>

- Protect Your Baby and Yourself from Listeriosis

[http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/foodborne-illness-and-disease/protect-your-baby-and-yourself-from-listeriosis/CT\\_Index](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/foodborne-illness-and-disease/protect-your-baby-and-yourself-from-listeriosis/CT_Index)

#### *Nonprofit Organization Websites*

- Exercise during Pregnancy

[www.marchofdimes.com/professionals/14332\\_1150.asp](http://www.marchofdimes.com/professionals/14332_1150.asp)

- Food Safety for Pregnant Women

<http://www.foodsafety.gov/risk/pregnant/index.html>

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