

FOOD SAFETY GUIDELINES

Food-borne illnesses such as Salmonella, Shigella, and E. Coli can be avoided by safe food selection, handling, and preparation. This is always important, but it is particularly important during pregnancy, when your immune system does not fight infections as readily as it does otherwise.

We strongly recommend that you avoid the following foods during pregnancy:

- ⊙ **Luncheon/Deli Meats** – As they may be incompletely cooked, and often times are made with nitrates; sodium nitrate, a known carcinogen (cancer causing agent). ALL Applegate Farms and MOST Boar's Head products are free of additives, but may be incompletely cooked, requiring further cooking at home before consumption.
- ⊙ **Unpasteurized Dairy Products**
- ⊙ **Uncooked or Undercooked Meat, Poultry, Fish, and Eggs**
- ⊙ **Fish** – Many concerns - please refer to next handout on Eating Fish Safely in Massachusetts.

Please take a minute to review the following handout entitled "A Guide to Eating Fish Safely in Massachusetts" for fish safety advisories and general food safety. For more information log onto www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Basics_for_Handling_Food_Safely/index.asp You can then browse through the Fact Sheets tab to select the topic of your choice.

What about Caffeine?

The current recommendation is to limit caffeine to one moderate-sized serving daily.

What about Herbal Teas?

Most commercially available herbal teas are alright. Red raspberry, blackberry, chamomile, mint, lemon & nettle are fun teas. Ginger tea can help with nausea. Moderation allows for most any type of tea intake without worry. Some teas do contain caffeine. Many have pesticides. Consider an organic source. Avoid ginseng, pennyroyal, golden seal, Echinacea and hibiscus.

What about Sugar?

A glycemic index measures the impact that a food has on blood sugar levels 2 to 3 hours after ingestion. The lower the glycemic level, the lower the rise in blood sugar levels. Sugar has no nutritional value and suppresses the immune system.

What about substitute sweeteners?

Worse than sugar is the artificial sweetener called Aspartame. It is known to cause headaches, joint pain, fatigue, depression, seizures and memory loss. It breaks down into formaldehyde, a known carcinogen and can interfere with DNA replication. Sucralose (Splenda) is currently considered by the FDA to be safe in pregnancy. Fructose is a natural sweetener with one of the lowest glycemic indexes of any food. However, you may be advised to avoid all added sugars if you develop gestational diabetes. Grade B maple syrup contains nutrients as does honey. Stevia, derived from a plant leaf, and prepared with a chicory extract, is a naturally sweet, fructooligosaccharide which also provides dietary fiber and promotes the growth of healthy intestinal flora. Research suggests that this can have a positive effect on carbohydrate metabolism and a stabilizing effect on blood sugar.

What about Alcohol?

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome is associated with daily intake of alcohol throughout the pregnancy. This robs both mother & baby of nourishment & disrupts normal fetal development. This syndrome is not created by a random incident of alcohol intake, such as that vacation or party before you were aware that you were carrying a passenger. Mother Nature provides something of a grace period between conception and time of your missed period, during which the connection between your circulatory system and the embryo is not fully developed. Make the clearest decision that you can, given the information available to you at that time.