

# Foods to Avoid in Pregnancy

**Deli Meat:** Some deli meats may have listeria, a bacteria that may cause miscarriage. If you are pregnant and plan to eat deli meats, be sure to reheat them until steaming hot (165°F).



Refrigerated pâté or meat spreads may have listeria bacteria and should be avoided. Canned or shelf-stable pâté or meat spreads can be eaten.

**Raw Meat:** Uncooked seafood, shellfish, and rare or undercooked beef, pork, and poultry should be avoided because of the risk of bacterial contamination.

**Fish with Mercury:** Large fish that prey on other fish, such as swordfish, king mackerel, tilefish, and shark, should all be avoided.

If you eat fish caught by family or friends, check for [fish advisories](#). If there are no local warnings, eat only one serving and no other fish that week.

**Smoked Seafood:** Refrigerated smoked seafood, often labeled as lox, kipper, or jerky, should be avoided when you are pregnant. These foods are safe to eat if they have been reheated, like in a casserole. Canned or shelf-stable smoked seafood is usually safe to eat while pregnant.

Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding can eat between 8 to 12 ounces of a variety of seafood per week, from choices that are lower in mercury. Learn more about [eating fish during pregnancy](#).

**Alcohol:** Drinks containing alcohol include beer, wine, liquor, mixed drinks, and malt beverages. No amount of alcohol is safe for your baby when you are pregnant. Talk with your doctor before considering drinking alcohol while you are breastfeeding. No alcohol consumption is the safest option.

**Caffeine:** Caffeine is in coffee, tea, and soda. Ask your health care provider about consuming caffeine during pregnancy. Some research shows that large amounts of caffeine are associated with miscarriage, premature birth, low birth weight, and/or withdrawal symptoms in infants.

**Raw Eggs:** Any food with raw eggs should be avoided because of the risk of salmonella poisoning. Instead of homemade Caesar dressings, mayonnaise, ice creams, custards, and hollandaise sauce may all have raw or undercooked eggs in them. If dining out, ask about the ingredients. Avoid making recipes with raw eggs at home.

**Soft Cheeses:** Brie, Camembert, Roquefort, feta, Gorgonzola, and Mexican-style cheeses such as queso blanco and queso fresco should be avoided unless their packaging clearly states that they are made from pasteurized milk.

**Unpasteurized Milk/Juice:** Make sure that any milk/juice that you drink has been pasteurized. Milk purchased from any grocery store has been pasteurized. All WIC approved juices are pasteurized.

