

Foods to avoid

Foods infected by Listeria can be very dangerous for an unborn baby. Listeria is a bacteria that can cause a type of food poisoning known as listeriosis. Foods potentially infected by Listeria include unpasteurised soft cheeses, cold pressed meat, raw and smoked seafood, pre-prepared salads, soft-serve ice-cream and paté.

Early pregnancy complications – up to 3 months

The first three months of pregnancy can be an uncertain time.

Miscarriages occur in about one in five confirmed pregnancies. Sometimes it is hard to know whether a miscarriage is happening as many women have mild period like pain, twinges and pulling in the early weeks of pregnancy as the uterus starts to grow.

Warning signs of miscarriage

Warning signs of miscarriage may include one or all of the following:

- severe pain in the lower abdomen
- cramping
- vaginal bleeding

If you think you are having a miscarriage you should:

- consult a health practitioner such as a doctor or
- call *healthdirect* Australia 1800 022 222 – a 24-hour government health information and advice line

What we know about early miscarriage

- Miscarriages are common in early pregnancy – occurring in about one in five confirmed pregnancies
- Miscarriages can be devastating for the parents
- Avoiding stress, work and daily activities does not stop a miscarriage
- Miscarriages cannot be stopped by medical intervention but intervention for recurrent miscarriage can help
- Miscarriages can be the result of some developmental issue with the developing baby
- Women who miscarry are still likely to have healthy babies in the future
- Seek support from family and friends to help you get through this difficult time
- Additional support is available through counsellors and support agencies. Call SIDS and Kids NSW on 1800 651 186

More information

healthdirect Australia 1800 022 222

A 24-hour government health information and advice line connecting patients with registered nurses who can help assess if you need medical care and link you with local facilities.

MotherSafe NSW (02) 9382 6539 or 1800 647 848

A free counselling service for women concerned about exposure to drugs, medication, infections, radiation or occupational exposures during pregnancy or breast feeding.

SIDS and Kids NSW 1800 651 186

SIDS and Kids NSW provides bereavement support for individuals and families who experience the death of their baby during pregnancy, birth and infancy. This includes miscarriage, stillbirth, neonatal death, sudden infant death (SIDS) and the death of a child up to 6 years of age.

www.sidsandkids.org

NSW Health publications

Early pregnancy – when things go wrong
Having a Baby

These publications can be downloaded from
www.health.nsw.gov.au/pubs

Thinking
of having
a baby –

planning a pregnancy
and becoming pregnant

Planning a pregnancy and becoming pregnant is an exciting and busy time for prospective parents. Along with the plans and dreams they hold for the future, parents must start thinking about a range of dietary and health issues to help give themselves, and their baby, the best start possible.

Planning a pregnancy – 3 months before

There are many things to consider before becoming pregnant – even if this is a second or subsequent pregnancy.

Ideally, about three months before trying to conceive, men and women should visit their general practitioner (GP) and possibly make some changes to their diet and lifestyle.

A GP will take into consideration any special health issues that may need to be managed during a pregnancy and provide advice on immunisation updates, recommended tests, genetic issues or lifestyle changes.

If you use over the counter, prescription medication or herbal remedies, check with your GP to ensure they are safe to take while trying to conceive and while pregnant.

Avoid infection – wash your hands

Some infections can harm the development of your unborn baby, and in some cases can result in miscarriage. To avoid infection, wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol rub.

Wash your hands:

- after contact with body fluids such as saliva, nasal secretions, blood or vomit
- after changing nappies or going to the bathroom
- before you eat, before and after you prepare food
- after gardening or touching animals
- whenever your hands look dirty

Women:

- Begin taking folate
- Check immunisation levels
- Have a dental check-up
- Have a pap test
- Consider losing weight if you are overweight
- Stop or reduce cigarettes, alcohol, caffeine & other drugs
- Check medicines and herbal remedies are safe
- Maintain a healthy diet and enjoy regular exercise

Men:

Sperm takes three months to develop so good living should begin well before trying to conceive. If there is a family history of genetic issues it may be worthwhile to consult a doctor about managing the risks before trying to conceive.

- Stop or reduce cigarettes, alcohol, caffeine and other drugs – babies whose fathers smoke are more likely to have a low birth weight and alcohol consumption has been shown to reduce sperm quality
- Maintain a healthy diet and enjoy regular exercise – good food and exercise help balance hormones and increase sperm quality
- Check medicines and herbal remedies are safe

Taking some time – infertility

Couples who have not become pregnant after a year may want to consult a doctor. If a woman is 35 years or older, couples may prefer to seek medical advice after about six months of trying to become pregnant.

Women who fall pregnant but suffer repeated miscarriages, normally three in a row, should consult a doctor.

A baby on the way

Feeling excited, unsure, nervous and elated are all normal and very common reactions to being pregnant. Women may start to feel a physical connection with the baby very early, especially if they experience strong early pregnancy symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, breast tenderness or slight pains in the abdomen.

Early pregnancy – up to 3 months

In the first trimester, the first three months of pregnancy, the developing baby goes through a time of intense growth. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle and weight can reduce the risk of complications in pregnancy. It can also help the baby develop and make it easier for a woman's body to deal with the many changes it is going through.

It is still worth making healthy lifestyle changes at this point if you have not done so already.

- Talk to a GP or midwife about any general health issues or check-ups you may need
- Consider who will be responsible for your pregnancy care and book into hospital
- Eat lots of fresh fruit and vegetables
- Quit smoking and avoid passive smoking
- Avoid caffeine, drugs and alcohol
- Continue or begin taking folate
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Enjoy gentle, regular exercise
- Wash your hands to avoid infection
- Check medicines and herbal remedies are safe