

No-Nonsense Guide to a Naturally Healthy Pregnancy and Baby

Posted by: [Dr. Mercola](#)

November 07 2009 | 13,062 views

By Dr. Mercola



What You Need to Know for a Happy and Stress-Free Pregnancy

Making sure that your baby gets a healthy start in life is one of your biggest priorities. That means ensuring that your nutritional intake is at optimal levels.

The purpose of this article is to give you the absolute best and most current recommendations that I have culled from over three decades of being involved in health care. I know it is a major challenge to sort through all the confusion, so I am going to do the hard work for you and provide some simple, practical, and solid tips for helping you to bring the healthiest child possible into this world.

Some of the main things I will be discussing with you include the importance of:

- Healthy daily doses of omega-3s
- Optimizing your vitamin D levels
- Regular exercise
- Eating for vitality and health
- Just saying no to vaccinations
- Removing your mercury amalgams
- Treating severe gum disease
- Minimizing pesticide exposure
- Using the safest cosmetics
- Avoiding exposure to phthalates

The Importance of Omega-3 Fats During Pregnancy

After reviewing many tens of thousands of articles on nutrition, I am convinced that the single most important dietary influence on your prenatal health is adequate omega-3 fats.¹ Most women have major deficiencies of this fat, and given the statistics, it's very possible you do too.

A study in March 1991 at the Mayo Clinic of 19 "normal" pregnant women consuming normal diets showed that all were deficient in omega-3 fats. Another study of Inuit (Eskimo) women, compared to Canadian women, revealed omega-3 deficiency in the milk of the Canadian nursing mothers.²

Omega-3 fat and its derivative, DHA (docosahexaenoic acid), is so essential to a child's development that if a mother and infant are deficient in it, the child's nervous system and immune system may never fully develop, and it can cause a lifetime of unexplained emotional, learning, and immune system disorders.

While most people are seriously lacking in omega-3s, they are overdoing another type of fat: omega-6. The ideal ratio of omega-6 to omega-3 fats is 1:1. Today, though, most Americans' ratio of omega-6 to omega-3 averages from 20:1 to 50:1! ³

It's very important to get your omega-6 to omega-3 ratio closer to the ideal 1:1. To do this, simply cut back on all vegetable oils (this includes those in processed foods, like cookies, chips, and crackers) and get a regular supply of high-quality omega-3 fat, which I'll be telling you how to do, later on.

In the next few sections you'll learn even more reasons why omega-3s are so critical to you and your baby's health, and why I recommend that every pregnant woman maintain an optimal daily dose of omega-3s.

Omega-3s Provide Phenomenal Protection Against Prematurity

Optimizing your omega-3 intake will virtually guarantee that your baby will be full term. Prematurity is the leading cause of death during a baby's first month of life, and serious complications can occur later in life for preemies who survive.⁴ Studies show that the earlier a child is born, the higher the risk of complications, including:

- Respiratory distress syndrome
- Bleeding in the brain
- Less ability to fight off infection due to immature immune system
- Mental retardation
- Cerebral palsy
- Lung problems
- Gastrointestinal problems
- Vision and hearing loss.

The good news is that the DHA in animal-based omega-3 fats will prevent the vast majority of premature deliveries,⁵ as well as the other complications listed above.

More Omega-3 Benefits for Mom And Baby

Omega-3s contain a powerhouse of nutrients to ensure that your baby will develop properly and reach its highest potential. These nutrients help to maximize the intelligence⁷ of your child, and protect your baby from brain injuries such as autism, pervasive developmental delay, and ADHD.

Studies have shown that sufficient levels of omega-3 fats optimize brain growth in children, especially during the third trimester.⁸

And in addition, omega-3 fats have been found to be highly effective in combating cardiovascular disease and depression. With hormones fluctuating so wildly during this time, you might find yourself dealing with some depression. It is a very common occurrence in pregnancy.

Research has now shown that low plasma concentrations of DHA, one of the main fats in omega-3 oil, are associated with low concentrations of brain serotonin. Serotonin has a calming effect on your brain and nervous system, so it is no surprise that a lack of it caused study participants to feel depressed and suicidal.⁹

However, in a British study, researchers found that women who consumed greater amounts of omega-3 fatty acids during the third trimester were less likely to show signs of major depression during pregnancy, and for up to eight months after the birth.¹⁰

Dietary supplementation with omega-3 oil concentrates has also been shown to reduce both the progression of cardiovascular disease and related mortality, including sudden cardiac death,¹¹ so make sure you get plenty of this critical nutrient to protect you and your baby during this important time.

Another great benefit of adding omega-3 oils to your diet is that they will help prevent your child from developing diabetes later in life.¹⁸ This goes back to the role of omega-3 fats in helping you carry your baby to term. Studies show that premature babies have a greater risk of developing diabetes. Let me also add that studies link this tendency towards diabetes to a lack of sufficient vitamin D prior to birth.

Hopefully all this has convinced you how important it is to have plenty of omega-3s in your diet so you can be amply protected against these risk factors during pregnancy.

Finding the Best Sources of Omega-3s

In past years, I have recommended that the best way to obtain your essential omega-3 fats was to consume fish, but because of the ever-increasing danger of ingesting too much mercury, my current belief is that fish should generally be avoided. The mercury contained in fish has been well documented to cause a variety of neurological birth defects.^{12,13}

Even the conservative FDA has warned that women should avoid most fish during pregnancy.¹⁴

Because of this issue, I recommend that you supplement your diet with a high-quality krill oil instead.¹⁵ Krill are small, shrimp-like crustaceans that inhabit the Earth's oceans. The purest oil is made from krill that are harvested in the deep, clean waters of the Antarctic.¹⁶

The reason I prefer krill oil to fish oil is that krill oil contains potent antioxidants, whereas fish oil is weaker in antioxidant content.

The major drawback to taking fish oil is that, as you increase your intake of omega-3 fats, you actually increase your need for more antioxidants.

Why is this?

Because fish oil is quite perishable, and oxidation leads to the formation of those unhealthy free radicals. Therefore, you need to take antioxidants to ensure that the fish oil doesn't oxidize and become rancid inside your body. But krill oil makes life simpler because you don't need to pop extra antioxidants every time you take your omega-3s.

And the essential fatty acids DHA and EPA are also present in krill oil. At one time, fatty fish like salmon was an excellent source of these acids, but because of the mercury contamination mentioned previously, as well as PCB contamination¹⁷ and even more, it is no longer a safe choice.

All these contaminants outweigh the benefits you could get from their omega-3 content (particularly since you can get them from krill oil, which is purified of contaminants). And please note that your prenatal vitamins do not contain one microgram of DHA!

Another healthy source for obtaining omega-3 is beef fed exclusively on grass. If you can find a local producer, it would be wise to seek out this food source.

Are Plant Sources of Omega-3 Acceptable?

It is important to note that plant-based omega 3 fats do not provide the same benefits as animal-based, because most of us can't convert the ALA in plant-based fats to the appropriate amount of DHA that is required.⁶

Flax seeds, walnuts, and other plant sources of omega-3 should not be substituted for animal omega-3s, as you will simply not receive the same benefits because they are not metabolized as efficiently. For more information and precautions about nuts during pregnancy, please see the section titled Limit Nuts.

Add Sunshine for Optimally Healthy Baby

Without question one of the single most important strategies you can have for a healthy baby is to make sure you have optimal vitamin D levels. There is about a 90 percent chance that you do NOT have healthy vitamin D levels for a variety of reasons.

If you work indoors a lot, it's likely you don't have sufficient levels of vitamin D, because sunlight is where most or all of our vitamin D comes from. Also, if you live in a northern latitudes where you don't spend much time outdoors even when you aren't working, there's an extra good chance you may be D-deficient as well.

Your windows also screen out the vast majority of UVB rays from the sun shining through, so you will NOT generate significant levels of vitamin D by sitting in front of a sunny window. There are other benefits to doing that, but generating healthy vitamin D levels is not one of them.¹⁹

A recent study has shown that even if you live in more southern areas and spend more time outdoors, you may still be deficient in vitamin D. The study showed that adults in southern Arizona were found to be deficient in vitamin D, particularly those with darker skin which produces less vitamin D in response to sunlight.

More than a quarter of Arizona adults who were tested had dangerously low blood levels of the vitamin.

On top of that, most people don't eat much vitamin-D rich fish, which these days is actually a good thing. While missing the vitamin D, you and your baby are also happily missing the high mercury levels that most fish contain,²⁰ due to the ongoing pollution of our waters.

I believe the very best way to optimize your vitamin D level is with regular exposure of large portions of your skin to the sun. However, I realize that may be difficult if it's snowing outside, so that's why I recommend you get your vitamin D from an oral form of vitamin D3 (cholecalciferol).

Vitamin D3 comes from fish oil, and is the best and most effective form of oral vitamin D. Vitamin D3 is also found in eggs, organ meats, animal fat, cod liver oil, and fish. It is the equivalent to the vitamin D3 formed on your skin from UV-B.

However, you must have your blood levels checked before you begin any supplementation program. This is best done by a nutritionally oriented physician. The advantage of having your medical doctor perform the test is that it will usually be covered by your medical insurance.

It is also very important that you order the correct test.²¹ There are two tests with very similar names, so don't be confused. They are 1,25(OH)D and 25(OH)D. **The correct test is 25(OH)D, also called 25-hydroxyvitamin D.**

Make Sure Your Doctor Uses the Correct Testing Lab

Recent developments in 2008 also made it clear that there are irregularities in the values obtained from different testing methods. So while you may get results from any of the three assays that are *analytically* accurate, they might not be *clinically* accurate, which is, ultimately, what matters.

Therefore, in order for the test to offer you clinically relevant results, I recommend using LabCorp. Their radioimmunoassay (RIA) method for measuring total vitamin D levels has become the gold standard, not because it's more accurate than others, but because it's the one used in almost every major vitamin D study, on which the blood levels for clinical efficacy are based.²²

It also recently came to my attention that the test done by Quest labs, a frequently used lab, gives vitamin D values that are consistently about 25-40 percent higher than the DiaSorin assay.

What does this mean?

While the test Quest uses is analytically accurate, you may be FALSELY reassured that your levels are in the optimal range, which might cause you to stop or discontinue treatment, when you really need more vitamin D. This is why it is so important for you to use the right lab and the right test.

As far as test results, you should strive for levels of 60 ng/ml. This is currently considered the optimal level for vitamin D.

Add Exercise to Your Daily Schedule

Exercise should be an important part of your health routine while you're pregnant, as long as your doctor has not indicated otherwise. In fact, vigorous exercise has been shown to decrease the possibility of premature birth.²³

In a study conducted between 1995 and 1998, close to 1,700 pregnant women were questioned about their leisure activity during the three months before pregnancy, as well as during the first and second trimesters. Of the women questioned, 22 percent exercised vigorously before pregnancy -- 14

percent during the first trimester, and eight percent during the second. Vigorous activity included jogging or bicycling at a moderate to fast pace, swimming, or aerobic, fast-paced dancing.

Women who exercised vigorously during the first trimester were 20 percent less likely to deliver prematurely, compared with those who did not. Those who reported vigorous activity during their second trimester reduced their risk of premature, or pre-term birth, by 48 percent.

A later study indicated that women who exercised at the same rate throughout their pregnancies had larger placentas than their more sedentary peers. The volume of the placenta is a general marker of its ability to transport oxygen and nutrients to your baby. The study also indicated that a more intense exercise regimen may result in babies who weigh less at birth.²⁴ However, none of the babies born to women who exercised moderately or intensely through the ninth month were considered unhealthy.

These findings indicate that regular weight-bearing exercise is beneficial for both you and your baby, and that the amount of benefit varies with the timing and amount of exercise.

Eating for Two

I'm sure you have heard the term "eating for two." For many years, mothers-to-be were told that because they were pregnant, they must eat for two. But this is a very misleading statement. Some women gain far too much weight in the misguided belief that they must provide additional nutrition for their growing child.

Others may simply use this statement as an excuse to eat whatever they want. In either case, surveys now show that roughly half of all pregnant women are overweight or obese.²⁵

The truth is, obesity can wreak havoc on your health, and that havoc will extend throughout your pregnancy and affect your unborn child. The side-effects of obesity include birth defects,²⁶ infertility,²⁷ heart disease,²⁸ and much more. Studies also show that overweight or obese women have a greater tendency than normal-weight women to produce children who will also become overweight.²⁹

So it's important to your health and to your baby's to keep your weight within reasonable parameters, so you can both avoid problems down the road.

Eating the Right Foods for Baby

While it is true that we should always strive to eat properly, remember that a precious cargo – your baby -- is now sharing your food supply. His little body has no choice but to try to make good nutrition from whatever you eat, so it is more important than ever to choose the right foods so that he can be assured of a strong, healthy adulthood.

In general, choose fresh, organic foods whenever possible. And eat a well-balanced diet consisting of adequate protein, healthy fats, fruits and vegetables.

Be sure to include plenty of leafy green vegetables, because they are loaded with folic acid, a B vitamin that studies have shown reduces the chance of your child being born with neural tube defects. Neural tube defects are a type of birth defect that affects the brain and spinal cord, and includes spina bifida.³⁰

You can find many good sources of locally grown organic vegetables and fruits at your neighborhood farmer's market.³¹ A good way to make sure you are eating properly is to eat according to your Nutritional Type.TM

There are basically three Nutritional TypesTM:

- Protein
- Carb
- Mixed.³²

Protein types do better on low-carbohydrate, high-protein, and high-fat diets. Carb types normally feel best when the majority of their food is carbohydrate. However, I do not mean refined carbs, such as from commercial cakes, pies, cookies, and the like. They will only create more health problems. Getting most of your carbohydrates from vegetables is very important.

And, if your Nutritional TypeTM is mixed, your requirements are between the carb and protein types.

Ascertaining whether you are a Protein, Carb, or Mixed Type will assure that you get the right balance of foods to nourish your particular metabolism. You can find out more about all of these Nutritional TypesTM at *Mercola.com*.

Eggs -- Powerful Pregnancy Allies

A very important food for pregnancy are raw eggs.³³ Raw eggs are a rich source of protein, carotenoids, and **choline**. Eggs contain yellow or orange carotenoids called lutein and zeaxanthin. Studies have shown that high dietary intake of lutein and zeaxanthin is associated with a significant reduction in the risk for:

- Cataracts (up to a 20-percent reduction)
- Age-related macular degeneration (up to a 40-percent reduction).³⁴

Other good sources of lutein and zeaxanthin are green vegetables, such as spinach and broccoli.

Choline, another important nutrient in eggs, has been shown to improve learning and memory in animals. Researchers say this data could mean that choline can boost human cognitive function, diminish age-related memory decline, and decrease toxic "insults" to the brain.³⁵

Also, despite what you may have heard, the risk of salmonella from raw eggs is extremely low when you buy healthy, organic eggs. Salmonella infections are usually present only in traditionally raised commercial hens. If you are purchasing your eggs from healthy chickens, the infection risk reduces dramatically. Remember, only sick chickens lay salmonella-contaminated eggs. If you are obtaining high quality, cage-free, organically fed, omega-3-enhanced chicken eggs, the risk virtually disappears.

Other egg myths that should be debunked are that eggs increase cholesterol levels or are a causative factor in heart disease. The most recent research has clearly shown that eggs do not cause a worsening of cholesterol, nor do they increase the risk of heart disease.³⁶

What researchers in previous studies never took into account, when studying the link between bad cholesterol and eggs, are the specific subclasses of LDL cholesterol. The smaller fractions of LDL are more dangerous and are associated with an increased risk of heart disease, while the larger ones are not dangerous. So rest assured, if you choose free-range, organic eggs, they are one of the healthiest, and safest, foods you can eat.

A few notes about breastfeeding. After you deliver your baby, you should keep the following points in mind when deciding about breastfeeding your infant. I strongly recommend breastfeeding because it strengthens your child's immune system, protecting him against many physiological assaults later in life.

One of the reasons for this is that a healthy mother's milk is high in essential fats, GLA, and other precursors to prostaglandins (potent, hormone-like substances that control a wide range of physiological functions such as blood pressure, contraction of smooth muscle, and modulation of inflammation).

However, cow's milk is low in essential fats and other prostaglandin precursors, and high in saturated fats. For this reason, cow's milk is not an adequate substitute for mother's milk. Neither is baby formula.

At a recent international symposium on Dietary Omega-3 and -6 Fatty Acids, Dr. Neuringer, an authority on infant milk, stated that the low omega-3, high omega-6 content in infant formulas was of great concern because of the imbalance it causes among the prostaglandins.³⁷ These imbalances can impair your baby's immune system and predispose your infant to cancer and heart trouble later in life.

However, should you decide not to breastfeed, feeding your baby a few drops of flax seed oil daily will help to make up the deficiency of omega-3 essential fatty acids .

Are Vaccinations Really Necessary?

Many mothers may feel that vaccinations are beneficial, and without them, they or their baby might suffer harm. Nothing could be further from the truth.

First and foremost, vaccines contain mercury, which has been shown, even in low concentrations, to impair energy production, impair neurotubule stability (neurotubules are essential to normal brain cell function), and activate brain free radical production, among many other destructive things.³⁸

To avoid these potentially grave effects, you should avoid all vaccinations while you are pregnant, as well as avoid having your baby get any vaccinations after birth.

The brain has one of the highest metabolic rates of any organ, and impairment of its energy supply, especially during your baby's development, can have devastating consequences.

A study undertaken by Dr. Thomas Verstraeten, representing the CDC at that time, looked at data from the Vaccine Safety Datalink and found a significant correlation between thimerosal (*49.6% mercury by weight*) exposure in vaccines and several neuro-developmental disorders including tics, speech delays, and possibly even ADD.³⁹

Despite the damning evidence that vaccines contained a potent neurotoxin, and despite recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics and others that thimerosal be removed, five years after the Verstraeten study, in 2004, the CDC still insisted that there was no scientific evidence of harm from exposure to thimerosal-containing vaccines.⁴⁰

Currently, California, Delaware, Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, New York, and Washington ban thimerosal in vaccines.⁴¹

Furthermore, children are getting mandated to have more and more vaccines at younger and younger ages. It has gotten so ridiculous, not to mention dangerous, for children whose immune systems are delicate and still developing, to have this many vaccinations.

Under the conventional schedule of immunizations, before a child reaches the age of two, he or she will have received 32 vaccinations, including four doses each of vaccines for Hemophilus influenzae type b infections, diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis -- **all of them given during the first 12 months of life**. Seven vaccines injected into a 13-pound, two-month old infant are equivalent to **70 doses in a 130-pound adult!**

In the wake of this, Dr. Donald Miller, a medical doctor and instructor of cardiac surgery at the University of Washington School of Medicine, has suggested a better approach, what he calls a “user friendly vaccination schedule.”

Dr. Miller states that the most rapid period of brain development begins in the third trimester, and continues over the first two years of extra uterine life.⁴² He believes that until randomized controlled trials demonstrate the safety of giving vaccines during this time of life, it would be prudent not to give any vaccinations to children until they are 2 years old.

Also, his user-friendly vaccination schedule requires that vaccinations, after the age of two, be given no more than once every six months, one at a time, in order to allow the child’s immune system sufficient time to recover and stabilize between shots.

For more details on Dr. Miller’s vaccination plan and other suggestions on how you can protect yourself and your baby from unnecessary vaccinations, please go to *Mercola.com*.

Remove Your Mercury Amalgams

Please understand that if you have mercury amalgam “silver” fillings, you are dumping the mercury from your fillings into your baby. Ideally, it would be best to remove your fillings BEFORE you become pregnant. But if you are already pregnant, it is probably best not to remove your fillings until after you deliver.

And if you have mercury amalgams, it would be wise to avoid chewing gum, because chewing liberates mercury vapors that can deposit in your child.⁴³ And mercury vapor easily enters breast milk, so this is an ongoing issue after birth as well.

Studies have already shown that mercury in the mother can cause birth defects in her child, but the orthodox medical community has remained slow to accept this, until just recently.

The FDA reluctantly admitted last year that the mercury contained in amalgam fillings “may have neurotoxic effects on the nervous systems of developing children and fetuses.”⁴⁴

At least two studies have shown that elemental mercury accumulation within a developing baby increases with time, so that the levels of mercury in the fetal organs are significantly higher toward the end of the pregnancy than during early pregnancy.⁴⁵

And it is now confirmed that mercury levels in a baby’s brain reach even higher levels following birth, despite an end to exposure from the mother’s mercury. Researchers think this is due to a redistribution of the mercury from the fetus’ liver to its brain.

This transfer of mercury from a mother to her child has been confirmed in at least two human studies as well.⁴⁶ Another case involved a female surgeon exposed to 0.05mg/M3 mercury vapor at work, who bore a baby with severe brain damage. The baby’s blood mercury was shown to be elevated.

The study stated that these levels of mercury can easily occur when a pregnant mother has a large number of dental amalgam fillings, chews gum, and is exposed to hot food and drinks.

Therefore, if you have mercury amalgams, not only avoid gum chewing, but also try to let liquids and food cool down before eating, so they do not liberate more mercury.

There are some other steps that you can take to help protect your baby from mercury toxicity, and diminish possible harm. Vitamin C and selenium are both helpful when it comes to protection from the toxic effects of mercury. For example, we know that vitamin C detoxifies oxidized fat, and that it can also protect your body against DNA damage.⁴⁷

Selenium, a trace mineral found in fish, meat, eggs, and some other foods, helps your immune system defend against viruses. Selenium has also been shown to bind with mercury, and logically, should cause it to be excreted from the body.

If you decide to take a selenium supplement, be sure to choose inorganic selenium rather than organic, since the organic form can build up in the tissues, while excess inorganic selenium is excreted automatically.⁴⁸

Both of these natural aids, as well as eating a properly balanced diet with plenty of green, leafy vegetables and fresh, organic foods, should help afford protection for you and your baby until you deliver and are through with breastfeeding. At that time, I recommend that you have your mercury amalgams removed by a dentist licensed in mercury removal protocols.

Protect Your Child from Pesticide Exposure

Alarming statistics have been coming to light daily about the dangers of exposure to pesticides and other chemicals. A 2007 article in the *Los Angeles Times* reported that women who lived near California farm fields that were sprayed with organochlorine pesticides might be more likely to give birth to children with autism.⁵¹

The autism rate was highest for children whose mothers lived closest to the fields, while it declined as the distance from the fields increased.

Another study, conducted in 2008, found that pregnant women who worked at a Denmark greenhouse reported that their sons had a higher incidence of reproductive abnormalities than had been previously reported in that area, and their blood hormone levels differed significantly from normal.⁵²

Additional studies have found that exposure to chemicals has been believed to be a causative factor in miscarriages,⁵³ childhood learning problems,⁵⁴ and even fetal death.⁵⁵

This indicates how critical it is to make sure you safely dispose of any pesticides around your house so you do not come in contact with them, and preferably, have someone else do it so you won't risk further exposure.

And, if you have a job that potentially could expose you to hazardous chemicals while you are pregnant, consider taking a leave of absence or otherwise distancing yourself from the source of the chemicals.

Dangers Lurking Inside Your Home

The previous studies just concerned chemicals *outside* the home. But with the increasing use of all types of commercial household cleansers, even your home can be an unsafe place.

A recent study involving almost 14,000 children was conducted to see if there was a link between prenatal exposure to cleaning supplies and asthma. The children in the study were followed until they reached 3-and-a-half years of age. Results from the study revealed that the babies who were exposed to these chemicals most frequently were the ones most likely to develop persistent wheezing as young children.⁵⁶

Some of the chemicals most likely to be used in the home by pregnant women include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bleach• Carpet Cleaner• Dry Cleaning Fluid<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aerosols• Turpentine/White Spirit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Air Fresheners• Paint Stripper• Paint or Varnish• Pesticide/Insecticides• Window Cleaner• Toilet Bowl Cleaners
--	---

So, how can you protect yourself and your baby from these dangers? Here are some guidelines:

1. The easiest way is by not introducing these kinds of chemicals into your home in the first place. Especially if you are pregnant, they could potentially be harmful to your unborn child.
2. Consider getting rid of your existing towels, sponges, rags, and other conventional tools you clean your home with, as they are some of the top sources for illness-causing germs in your home. They also do a very poor job of cleaning the biological and toxic aspects of dirt in your home.
3. Make dietary changes to strengthen your immune system, as I describe in the section, *Eating The Right Foods For Baby*.

So What Should I Use to Clean My House?

I have discovered that a safe and inexpensive way to clean your house and to avoid the effects of harmful chemicals on your baby, is by using either vinegar alone as a cleaning agent, or with the addition of hydrogen peroxide.⁵⁷ This combination works exceptionally well both as a disinfectant and a sanitizer.

And it's economical as well. For example, it only takes a half-cup of white vinegar to make a quart of this simple, all-purpose cleaner.

Other economical and effective cleaners that are equally safe to use inside your home before and after pregnancy, can be made from ingredients such as white vinegar, baking soda, salt, and lemon juice. These items should be readily available in your kitchen or easily purchased, and have been proven effective as cleaning ingredients for generations.

There are also home cleaning “recipes” you can make that are safe to use during your pregnancy, such as those found at *ems.org*. These will help you create cleaning products that will also be environmentally safe, so they are a good investment for the future of our planet as well.⁵⁸

Beautify Yourself Safely

While you are being careful to protect your baby from the potential chemicals in many areas, be sure to consider the toxins in your everyday cosmetics. Over time, the chemicals in these products can impact both you and your baby's nervous systems, reproductive systems, and cause other health issues.

Most cosmetics, such as hair dyes, hair sprays, facial make-up, and fingernail polish are composed of a dizzying array of chemical compounds. The Toxic Chemicals Laboratory of New York State College studied many of the chemicals and found them to be mutagenic (having the ability to damage genes and chromosomes).⁵⁹

Recent studies have confirmed that these neurotoxins can easily pass through your blood and affect your unborn child. Unlike an adult, your growing baby does not have a functional blood-brain barrier to protect itself from toxic insult. This lack of a natural defense allows chemicals into your baby's brain with the potential to cause serious harm, such as a disruption in the delicate brain growth process.⁶⁰

In another study, a University of Nijmegen, Netherlands student investigated 306 mentally retarded children and their mother's job occupations. Results showed a 3.7 times increased risk of women cosmetologists having a mentally retarded child after being routinely exposed to hair care products or dyes during her pregnancy.⁶¹

However, you can avoid exposure to these chemicals by avoiding commercial cosmetics and hair care products, and seeking out natural items from your local health food store.⁶² You can also purchase safe cosmetics online.

EWG has a safe cosmetic site where you can purchase cosmetics, lotions, and other products that can keep you and your baby safe from harm. Find out further information at *Mercola.com* by entering the keywords “three green beauty” in the search window.

Halt Gum Disease

It's clear from numerous studies that pregnant women who suffer from dental disease have an increased risk of premature birth. One study found that the worse the gum disease is, the more likely a woman is to have a pre-term birth.⁶³ While scientists are still studying the biological mechanisms, animal research has shown that periodontal infections impair fetal growth.

So what can you do to minimize the risk? A number of things. Recently, studies have shown a strong correlation between increased vitamin C use and healthier gums.

In one such study, researchers analyzed the vitamin C intakes and periodontal disease indicators in over 12,000 adults, and found that patients who consumed less than the recommended 60 mg per day (about one orange) were at nearly one-and-a-half times the risk of developing severe gingivitis as those who consumed three times the RDA (more than 180 mg).⁶⁴

And in a 2005 German study, people with gum disease who ate two grapefruit a day for two weeks showed significantly less bleeding from their gums.⁶⁵

Lack of vitamin C has also been linked to premature deliveries and preeclampsia (pregnancy-induced high blood pressure, protein in the urine, and swelling due to fluid retention).^{66,67} Women with preeclampsia were found to have lower blood levels of vitamin C than women without the condition.

So my best recommendation is that you increase your consumption of vitamin C-rich foods. These include citrus fruits such as oranges and grapefruits, as well as kiwi fruit, cantaloupe, strawberries, tomatoes, cabbage, sweet red peppers, and broccoli. You should eat these foods fresh rather than canned, as canning destroys most of the vitamin C, and drastically reduces most of the other vitamins as well.

If you have diabetes, blood sugar abnormalities, or other conditions that might limit your intake of citrus fruits, which are some of the foods highest in vitamin C content, you can supplement with vitamin C in the form of Ester-C. This form of vitamin C has been shown to absorb significantly better and faster than regular ascorbic acid.⁶⁸

But just how much vitamin C is enough? Dr. Linus Pauling, a leader in vitamin C research for many years and the author of a number of books on the subject, suggests that adults take at least 2 grams of vitamin C daily.

While that's well over the recommended R.D.A., Dr. Pauling states, "There is much evidence about increased health with 2 grams a day, and of course even more with 4 or 6 grams a day."⁶⁹

Other vitamins that play a role in improving your periodontal health include folic acid and vitamins A and E. In one study, patients with normal plasma folate levels ingested 2 mg folic acid or a placebo twice daily for 30 days, under double-blind conditions. The folate increased the resistance of the gingiva to local irritants, leading to a reduction in inflammation--even though plasma folate levels were unchanged.⁷⁰

Vitamins A and E have been linked to a marked reduction in periodontal inflammation during pregnancy,⁷¹ so be sure you get plenty of these in your diet.

Vitamin A is plentiful in beef and chicken livers, mangos, apricots, carrots, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, spinach, and kale.

Vitamin E-rich foods include mustard greens, chard, sunflower seeds, spinach, and almonds.

But along with loading up on these vitamin-packed foods, be sure you greatly decrease or stop your intake of sugary foods and sweets. Excess sugar in your diet worsens gum disease. Once eaten, sugar becomes gooey, sticks to your teeth, and is difficult to remove. It forms plaque, which, if allowed to remain on your teeth for even a short time, can cause dental decay and periodontal disease.⁷²

That's why my personal preference for optimizing oral hygiene is the use of a dental scaler, the instrument that dental hygienists use. It seems to be one of the most effective ways to remove the plaque and help prevent dental and gum disease.⁷³

This must be used carefully, however, as you could damage your gums and teeth otherwise. I also enjoy using a hydro-floss, a magnetic water pik, which can also remove scale on your teeth.

Can Plastic Hurt Your Unborn Child?

Exposure to phthalates, a chemical commonly used in plastics, could cause you to be at risk for birth defects, as well as for a shortened pregnancy. A recent study researched various chemicals, nicknamed "gender-benders," that have been released into the environment, and found that the chemicals are causing male animals and male humans to take on feminine characteristics.

As I'm sure you'll agree, this is a very alarming trend! But is it really true? Are males slowly "disappearing," morphing into females?

Well, many studies now indicate these toxins may indeed be wreaking silent havoc within our male population. Male infertility is on the rise,⁷⁴ and about 250,000 fewer boys have been born in the last 30 years in the United States and Japan.

Scientists are linking these phenomenon to a body accumulation of these types of gender-bending toxins.

In Britain, scientists found that 50 percent of the male fish in lowland waters were growing eggs in their testes. Hermaphrodite polar bears have also been born.⁷⁵ Their disturbing findings are also relevant for humans, because all vertebrates have similar sex hormone receptors.

Another study reported that women exposed to phthalates gave birth more than one week earlier than women who were not exposed to them.⁷⁶

Exposure to phthalates is extremely common among pregnant women. These chemicals are added to numerous products including moisturizers, nail polishes, hairsprays, insect repellants, and more. They are also added to plastic products such as food containers, to add flexibility. The chemicals are known to leach out of these products and into the environment.

It was previously thought that exposure to phthalates occurred primarily through ingesting contaminated foods. But researchers have now found that phthalates can be inhaled and even absorbed through the skin, significantly increasing your exposure.

There is another chemical I want to warn you about, and that is Bisphenol A, or simply BPA. This chemical is used in hard, clear plastics such as baby bottles, food-storage containers, and the lining of soda cans. Every year, over 6 billion tons of BPA are used to make polycarbonate plastics.⁷⁷

This chemical can mimic hormones and cause birth defects. BPA can leach out of plastic products into food, and it is also a danger in baby formula cans.⁷⁸ Studies indicate it can also lead to early puberty.

Yet another plastic I recommend you avoid at all cost is Teflon, also known as PFOA. Manufactured by DuPont, this common, non-stick substance coats many cooking implements – frying pans, cooking pans, bake ware, even utensils. It is also found in anything from clothes to stain repellents, food packaging, and once again, cosmetics.⁷⁹ In addition, DuPont uses Teflon in other products such as firefighting foam and phone cables.

In a study conducted by DuPont itself, it was found that employees exposed to PFOA had elevated levels of total cholesterol and fats called triglycerides, which can increase the likelihood of a heart attack or stroke.⁸⁰ However, in typical fashion, common to most companies whose products are their livelihood, DuPont denied that there was any association between exposure to PFOA and the employee's symptoms.

And in infants, preliminary findings of a study at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health have linked PFOA to lower birth weights among newborns. The study sampled the blood of 300 newborns and looked at the levels of a variety of fluorinated chemicals in relation to their birth weight, head circumference, and other developmental markers.

The results? The higher the infants' level of exposure to PFOA, the lower their birth weight and head size.⁸¹

I previously ran a news item detailing the dangers of using products coated with Teflon.⁸² Specifically, the article reported that Teflon has been appearing in people and animals worldwide -- one study even found that in 23 states, 96 percent of 598 children tested had traces of the chemical in their blood!

The Environmental Protection Agency later made a statement, based on a risk assessment study done on animals, that exposure to PFOA creates a potential risk of developmental and other adverse effects, and they fined DuPont \$16.5 million for hiding data on PFOA toxicity for more than 20 years.⁸³

Because of these dangers, I would strongly suggest you avoid contact with these chemicals as much as possible by choosing natural care products. This is also a powerful motivator for choosing a place to live that is minimally polluted, so your developing child and others in your family will be protected from harm.

Other Pregnancy Do's and Don'ts

DO:

- Eat a healthy breakfast
- Get plenty of sleep
- Use probiotics
- Avoid anti-bacterial soaps
- Limit cell phone use

Get a Good Start with Breakfast

You have certainly heard the statement that breakfast is the most important meal of the day, and there's a good reason for that. According to a 1992 study, eating breakfast appears to have beneficial effects on appetite, insulin resistance, and energy metabolism.⁸⁴ Spanning eight years, this study followed the breakfast habits and risk factors for heart disease in over 2,800 adults, black and white, between the ages of 25-37.

The findings showed that obesity and insulin resistance syndrome rates were 35 percent to 50 percent lower among those who ate breakfast every day, compared to those who frequently skipped it. And eating a good breakfast makes sure that your baby is amply supplied with all the nutrients it needs for proper growth and development.

So when you plan your breakfasts, or other meals, make sure your baby doesn't share in any former junk food habits of yours, or be exposed to foods that can later cause allergic reactions, diabetes, or other lifelong problems. You should therefore immediately exclude:

- Doughnuts
- Cereals
- Fruit juice
- Waffles and pancakes
- Bagels, toast, and cereals (usually even whole-grain, organic types).

While there are some people who can tolerate whole grains and even thrive on them, others cannot. It is safe to assume that you should avoid them if you:

- Are overweight
- Have high cholesterol
- Have high blood pressure
- Have diabetes
- Have food allergies to wheat, oats, rye, or other grains.⁸⁵

If one more of these factors are present, you will best be served by avoiding these foods.

However, if you are a Nutritional Type⁸⁶ that is carbohydrate-oriented (this is only one-third of people) and you don't have any of the above problems, then grains are a possible option for you.

If you abide by these guidelines, you will find that your health will improve and you will have fewer pregnancy-related problems.

Get Your Zzzzzzzs if You Want a Healthy Baby

Sleep plays as dramatic a role in your overall health as do proper nutrition and regular exercise. Without sufficient sleep, your body will be challenged to reach its optimal state of health, and your baby's wellbeing will also suffer. So getting sufficient sleep should be a priority in your life.

Lesley Stahl of *60 Minutes* talked with sleep researchers across the country and found out some interesting things. For example, you can die from sleep deprivation, just like you can die from being deprived of food, and sleep deprivation can cause changes in your brain activity similar to those experienced by people with psychiatric disorders.

Further, sleep deprivation puts your body into a pre-diabetic state, and makes you feel hungry, even if you've already eaten. And consistent sleep deprivation can also raise your blood pressure and make you a prime candidate for a heart attack or stroke.⁸⁷

Your body depends on your biological clock (circadian rhythm) to steadily regulate your sleep/wake cycles. But when this process gets thrown off balance -- which is, unfortunately, very easy to do -- it can wreak havoc on you and your baby's health.

So how much sleep is enough? Sleep research indicates that if you are getting less than 6 hours a night, you are not getting enough sleep.⁸⁸

Although there is little or no data on how sleep deprivation in the mother affects her baby, since sleep deprivation affects your immune system, you can be sure that it also affects your baby's. And it is logical that when you lose sleep it can also affect your baby adversely, so to be safe, maintain good sleep habits.

Studies show that sleep deprivation can also leave you susceptible to many diseases, including diabetes,⁸⁹ obesity,⁹⁰ and even cancer.⁹¹

Pregnant women often need several hours more sleep than usual during their first three months of pregnancy.⁹² A good rule of thumb to follow is that if you feel tired when you wake, you probably aren't getting enough sleep.

But don't despair. There are ways to erase that sleep debt. Here are a few tips for a better night's sleep:

- *Get to bed as early as possible.* Our systems, particularly the adrenals, do a majority of their recharging or recovering during the hours of 11 p.m. and 1 a.m. In addition, your gallbladder dumps toxins during this same period. If you are awake, the toxins back up into the liver, which then back up into your entire system and cause further disruptions.
- *Don't drink any water, or just a minimum, within 2 hours of retiring.* This will reduce the likelihood, or frequency, of having to get up and go to the bathroom.
- *Avoid before-bed snacks, particularly grains and sugars.* This will raise blood sugar and inhibit sleep. Later, when blood sugar drops too low, you might wake up and not be able to fall back asleep.

- *Sleep in complete darkness, or as close as possible.* If there is even the tiniest bit of light in your room, it can disrupt your circadian rhythm and your pineal gland's production of melatonin and serotonin. There also should be as little light in the bathroom as possible, if you get up in the middle of the night.
- *Keep your feet warm.* Wearing socks to bed can keep you from waking up in the middle of the night. A study has shown that wearing socks to bed reduces night wakings because feet have the poorest circulation, so they often feel cold before the rest of the body.
- *Keep the temperature in the bedroom no higher than 70 degrees F.* Many people keep their homes, and particularly the upstairs bedrooms, too hot. This interferes.

Another thing you should be sure to avoid is either TV or the Internet 30 minutes prior to bed. The blue light coming from your television and computer monitor have been shown to “power up” your brain and alter your biological clock. Be especially careful to avoid video games, because these can keep you hyper for hours after you’re done.⁹³

Visit *Mercola.com* for many other tips to help you get a healthy night’s sleep.⁹⁴

Use Good Bacteria to Optimize Your Intestinal Health

Probiotics could turn out to be an expectant mother’s best friend. They are referred to as “friendly” bacteria, and are responsible for a number of important biological functions. Some of these include assisting with digestion, keeping other harmful bacteria at bay, and stimulating the immune system.⁹⁵

A number of studies have proven their many health benefits. Specifically, they have been useful in the prevention or control of:

- Premature labor
- Food and skin allergies in babies
- Inflammatory bowel disease
- Recurrent ear and bladder infections
- Chronic diarrhea
- Bacterial vaginosis.

Researchers in Finland used a type of bacteria found naturally in the gut called *Lactobacillus GG* (*Lactobacillus rhamnosus*), to try to prevent allergy development in at-risk infants. This type of bacteria is a safe and effective treatment for allergic inflammation and food allergies in babies.⁹⁶

Avoid Anti-bacterial Soaps

Antibacterial soaps can be very hazardous to your baby’s health as well as to yours. There was much hoopla over these soaps some years ago, yet tests show that they offer little protection against the most common germs -- but more importantly, studies show they actually form a carcinogen when mixed with water.

In a study published in the March 2, 2004 issue of *Annals of Internal Medicine*, participants who used antibacterial soaps and cleansers developed a cough, runny nose, sore throat, fever, vomiting,

diarrhea, and other symptoms just as often as people who used products that did not contain antibacterial ingredients.⁹⁷

Further, many traditional medical circles now accept the “hygiene hypothesis,” which centers on the idea that children need to be exposed to some bacteria in early childhood in order to strengthen their immune systems. Children who are not exposed to common bacteria, which are wiped out by antibacterial soap, may be more prone to allergies and asthma.⁹⁸

But a more critical problem is that antibacterial soaps contain triclosan, which can react with chlorine and form a carcinogen.⁹⁹ Triclosan, which is a widely used antibacterial ingredient in hand sterilization products, breaks down rapidly when exposed to chlorinated water, producing a number of toxic chemicals, including chloroform.

This finding was based on two studies that produced similar results, and researchers concluded that anyone using these products would be exposed to chloroform levels 40 percent higher than that found in tap water.¹⁰⁰

Another serious problem with these soaps is that they contribute to the problem of antibiotic-resistant germs, a growing threat to everyone’s health.¹⁰¹ When disinfectants are used in low levels, researchers found that they actually make certain bacteria more resistant to antibiotic treatment. This is true in hospital settings, and certainly applies to the low-level disinfectants you may use around your home.

Last but certainly not least, antibacterial products are endocrine disrupters that can contaminate human breast milk, and certainly can also be absorbed through your skin.¹⁰²

Because infants are so much more susceptible to chemicals than adults, especially in utero, if you have any antibacterial soap or disinfectants in your home, please remove them to avoid harming yourself or your child.

Use Serious Precautions When Using Your Cell Phone

A study by top research scientists concluded that women who use mobile phones when pregnant are more likely to give birth to children with behavioral problems. This study included more than 13,000 children. Pregnant women using the handsets only 2-3 times a day was enough to raise the risk of their babies developing hyperactivity and difficulties with conduct, emotions, and relationships when they reached school age.

The likelihood is even greater if the children themselves used the phones before the age of 7.¹⁰³

This study is far from being the first showing that the electromagnetic radiation from cell phones poses a hazard to a developing fetus. Animal studies have also shown that electromagnetic fields in that frequency range can affect their liver enzymes, glands, muscles, hormone balance, and heart and bone marrow.

In fact, the cellular stresses caused by information-carrying radio waves have been shown to cause DNA damage to the brain cells of rats,¹⁰⁴ and this means they have the potential to alter the DNA structure of a baby in utero.

Aside from the startling findings of this study, I believe that the increase in cell phone usage is also one of the primary causes of the autism epidemic.¹⁰⁵

Over 1 billion people who use cell phones on a regular basis are putting their health at risk, along with the health of their children and those waiting to be born, so be sure to keep cell phones away from your baby and other children.

The density of children's skulls is far less than adults', and their brains are more susceptible to damage from information-carrying radio waves. A child in the womb may be near defenseless against this damage.

Here are some tips to minimize the harmful effects of cell phones and other electrical devices on you and your baby:

- Do not use a cell phone while pregnant, and don't allow your children to use them.
- Limit the amount of time you spend on a cell phone or cordless phone.¹⁰⁶
- Use a wired headset to limit your exposure. Ideally, an air tube headset that conducts sound but prevents any radiation from traveling up the wire to your brain. Also, make sure the wire is shielded, which prevents it from acting as an antenna that could attract more information-carrying radio waves directly to your brain. Wireless BlueTooth headsets should be avoided.
- Limit your exposure to WiFi routers. Find out where they are located in your work environment and stay away from them.
- If you have any land-based (non-cellular) portable phones, do NOT use anything other than the 900- MHz phones, as the Gigahertz phones stay on continuously, blasting you with information-carrying radio waves 24/7.
- Use the speakerphone instead of putting the phone to your ear; this is probably one of the single most important steps you can take other than not using your cell phone.
- Limit calls inside buildings.
- Use your cell phone only where reception is good. If reception is poor, your phone has to work harder, and therefore emits a much stronger radiation signal.

Critical Items to Avoid During Pregnancy

- Soy products
- Caffeine
- Nuts
- Artificial sweeteners
- Fluoridated or chlorinated water

Avoid Soy

Soy products are perhaps the most hazardous of the Don'ts, even when you are not pregnant. But they should be avoided as much as possible during pregnancy, because a diet high in soy during pregnancy and breastfeeding can have a subtle, but long-term impact on the development of your child.

Soybeans contain compounds called phytoestrogens or isoflavones, which have been found to produce a variety of hormonal actions within your body. These hormones can adversely influence the way your baby's brain develops, the way the reproductive organs and cells grow, and even the way immune function develops.¹⁰⁷

Infants exposed to excess amounts of phytoestrogens in utero, or after birth in the form of soy formula, risk a variety of health complications, including early puberty, learning disabilities, and behavioral problems.¹⁰⁸ They also are at greater risk for developing severe allergies.

One study has linked soy consumption to brain damage and cancer.¹⁰⁹ For more information about the dangers of soy, including its impact on fertility and fetal development, I recommend you check out Kaayla Daniel's excellent book, [*The Whole Soy Story*](#).

Caffeine Caveat

I've been warning about the dangers of caffeine to pregnant women for years. It has always been my position that **no** amount of caffeine during pregnancy is safe.

A recent study on caffeine, conducted in 2008, shows that one dose of caffeine -- just two cups of coffee -- ingested during pregnancy, may be enough to affect fetal heart development and reduce heart function over the entire lifespan of the child.¹¹⁰ Take note: that's the equivalent of two cups of coffee *during the entire pregnancy* -- not two cups of coffee per day!

Caffeine is an addictive, stimulant drug that passes easily through the placenta to your developing baby. It is also transferred through breast milk. In babies (newborns and unborn), the half-life of caffeine is extended. It stays in your baby longer, and a developing infant has no ability to detoxify caffeine.

And never, ever -- drink coffee from a Styrofoam cup. The heat draws toxic chemicals from the cup, and you will drink those along with your java.¹¹¹

Additionally, most coffee contains pesticides, something you definitely don't want in your baby. Pesticides have been linked to stillbirths and miscarriages.¹¹¹ Also remember that caffeine is not just in coffee, tea, and chocolate, but also in colas and energy drinks, and a number of other beverages. Make sure you carefully check the labels on any beverages before you buy them.

You can do your baby and yourself a favor by swearing off caffeine for your entire pregnancy. And since breastfeeding is the best start you can give your child in life, do your baby another big favor and remain off caffeine for the duration of your breastfeeding as well.

Limit Nuts

Recent research has found that regular consumption of nut products during pregnancy raises the odds of your child having asthma symptoms by nearly 50 percent.

About 4 percent of American children have food allergies, and roughly 3 million people in the U.S. are allergic to peanuts or tree nuts. It's already recommended that children under three not be given nuts or nut products, because their immune systems are still developing and may be more susceptible to allergens.

I think it's important to note that while DAILY consumption of nut products increased the odds that a child would develop asthma, the researchers did not find an association between *rare* or *regular* consumption of nuts.¹¹² So this warning is really aimed at those of you who indulge in nut products on a daily basis.

Use Natural, Not Artificial, Sweeteners

To put it frankly, artificial sweeteners are very dangerous for both you and your unborn child. I've written an entire book on the topic of artificial sweeteners, but let me take you through a brief look at these dangerous drugs posing as sweeteners.

After pouring over countless literature from the FDA, plus medical and scientific studies, I am more convinced than ever that artificial sweeteners such as NutraSweet® (aspartame) and Splenda® (sucralose) can ruin your health, and that you should stay away from them. They are present in numerous foods, from baked goods, to yogurt, to soft drinks.

Artificial sweeteners can cause depression, migraines, and even brain tumors.¹¹³

A seven-year study on aspartame (also known as NutraSweet® or Equal®) has linked it to high rates of lymphomas, leukemias, and other cancers in rats.¹¹⁴ The rats were given the equivalent of four to five bottles of diet soda a day for a human. The carcinogenic effect of aspartame was found at levels as low as about 20 milligrams a day for humans. This is far less than current daily limits in America, which is 50 milligrams.

And if you are using Splenda® because you think it is a safe alternative to sugar or other artificial sweeteners like Nutrasweet, then you are in for a big surprise. Splenda® is marketed as a "healthful" and "natural" product since it is derived from sugar, however, its chemical structure is very different from sugar. Sucralose is actually a chemical substance.¹¹⁵

Studies have shown its use has resulted in reduced growth rate in newborns (and adults) at levels above 500 mg/kg.day, decreased red blood cells -- a sign of anemia (at levels above 1500 mg/kg/day), thyroid abnormalities, and aborted pregnancies.¹¹⁶

I think you must realize by now that having a drink or other product sweetened by one of these artificial sweeteners is just not worth the risk to your baby. Nearly every month I receive a report from someone who has had an adverse reaction to Splenda. You can see many of them posted on my site.

Thankfully, there are a few really safe and natural sweeteners on the market today. Stevia and xylitol are both tasty and healthy sweeteners that you can use instead of either sugar or artificial sweeteners. Some people have complained of a metallic, bitter taste to Stevia, but this comes from the processing method.

Check out different brands and you'll see this does not apply to all Stevia products. Stevia is currently available in the United States only as a nutritional supplement, while the FDA reviews its safety.¹¹⁷

It's ironic that although Stevia extract is approved as a food additive in a dozen countries including Japan, Brazil and China, it can only be sold in the U.S. as a dietary supplement. However, *compounds* from the Stevia plant can be legally used as a "natural" sweetener. The no-calorie sweetener Truvia is one such example.¹¹⁸

Truvia is not made from whole Stevia, just two of the sweetest compounds. This raises the question: *Is it still safe once you remove all the other compounds inherent in the original plant?* So far, no one knows. Therefore I would advise you to avoid sweeteners made from Stevia compounds such as Truvia, until its safety has been ascertained.

Xylitol is another great, all-natural sweetener made from birch trees. Xylitol has been shown to provide health benefit in more ways than just as a sweetener. According to scientific research studies, regular Xylitol consumption can result in fewer cavities, improved gum health,¹¹⁹ a reduction in nasal and sinus infections, and stronger bones.

In studies in Finland in 1994, Xylitol was shown to maintain bone density in rats that had their ovaries surgically removed. Without ovaries, estrogen levels in the rats plummeted, as did the bone density in the rats that were not given Xylitol. However, in the rats that were given Xylitol, bone density actually increased.¹²⁰

Xylitol also is said to be effective against *H. pylori*, the microorganism implicated in periodontal disease and gastric ulcers.

Nevertheless, if you struggle with insulin issues, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or extra weight, I suggest you avoid sweeteners altogether. Most sweeteners can also decrease your sensitivity to insulin.

Cleanse Your System with Healthy Water

It's so very important for you to drink pure water, especially if you are pregnant. Avoid tap and distilled water, and choose spring or filtered water.¹²¹ Tap water should be avoided because it contains chlorine, arsenic, and frequently fluoride, all toxic substances that can have dire consequences for your baby and you.

Further, researchers from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the National Geological Survey have found traces of antibiotics, birth control drugs, anti-depressants, and other drugs in many water samples taken across the country.

According to water quality expert Robert Slovak, from the fetus-forming stage of a child up to his or her teens, the sensitivity to the effects of toxic chemicals in water is tens of thousands of times more

than in an adult. This means you should be drinking the best possible water to protect your baby, because this is where the damage begins and where it can't be reversed.

Some water has even been found to contain lead.¹²² In the early 90s, lead was an ingredient in brass. So if you happen to live in a house that still has fixtures from the early 90s, there's a very good chance they are brass. That means you could have lead leaching into your water.

The way this happens is that water sits on these fixtures overnight, and that means it can absorb and dissolve the lead that's in the brass faucets.

And water can dissolve quite an astoundingly high amount of lead, especially if your water has certain aggressive tendencies, such as low pH and low alkalinity. So for the well being of your baby, if you have these pre-1990 fixtures, you should have your tap water tested for lead contamination. A lead test costs about \$25.

An alternative solution, if you simply have no other water option at present, would be to allow the water to run for a few moments first, which can drastically reduce the lead concentration. But until you're sure your water is safe and free from harmful contaminants, you should totally avoid tap water and find a purer source of water.¹²³

In addition, there are two other very dangerous substances in tap water you should be aware of, and these are formed by the municipal water disinfection process itself, according to water quality expert Slovak. These chemicals are trihalomethanes (THMs) and halo acetic acids (HAAs). They are called disinfection byproducts, or DBPs for short.

THMs have been linked to liver, kidney, and nervous system problems, in addition to cancer. The HAAs are primarily related to an increased risk of cancer.

So, removing fluoride, chlorine, DBPs, and some other toxic chemicals from your drinking water are critical requirements for any water, or house water filtration system, that you choose. You need to ensure that it will adequately protect you and your unborn child from the chemicals and pollutants found in tap water.

Complicating matters further, the environmental watchdog group, Natural Resources Defense Council, (NRDC), says there is no easy way to determine whether bottled drinking water is really pure or just rebottled tap water.¹²⁴ They suggest carefully checking the bottle label and even the cap. If it says "from a municipal source" or "from a community water system," this means it's derived from tap water.

Of course, it is still unclear whether or not the water has been refiltered since it left the tap.

And the jury is still out on distilled water as an effective form of water purification, so until more research is done, I would not use it unless no other form of purification is available to you, and only for short term use. Spring water is a good source, if you can be sure that it is as pure as claimed. Some bottled spring water has been found to simply be bottled tap water.¹²⁵

Charcoal filters are another option, but make sure you read the box carefully, so you know which toxins it filters out. Make sure at very minimum it removes chlorine, fluoride, lead, mercury, and arsenic, and try to choose a filter that meets NSF/ANSI standard 53. While certainly not all-

encompassing, this standard gives you some assurance that the filter will at least reduce the levels of some common pollutants.

The pros for carbon filters are that they are simple to install, relatively economical, and depending on micron level, will filter out the most deadly of contaminants, such as *Cryptosporidium* and *Giardia*.¹²⁶

The cons are that carbon filters gather the 'garbage' in your tap water, and the organic component of this garbage is quite capable of rotting. Also, carbon filters may be susceptible to mold attacks if left unused for extended periods. Further, they cannot filter out all possible contaminants, but only those they say they do.

Some charcoal filters are enhanced with activated nano-silver, which provides some extra antibacterial protection, killing around 650 known types of organisms. Also, if sediment is a problem where you live, you should consider adding a second, separate sediment prefilter. Otherwise, if you buy a more expensive charcoal filter, it can become clogged up long before its normal lifespan.

But these filters are not totally effective in filtering out all the contaminants and carcinogens in your water that could cause you harm, so I would suggest, for the health and welfare of your baby, to only use one until you can afford a more effective option, such as a Reverse Osmosis system.

I believe the most complete and sure method for removing toxic elements in your drinking water is a Reverse Osmosis (RO) system. This system has the ability to remove both THMs and arsenic from the water, as well as chlorine, fluoride, and a wide array of other additives and contaminants. An RO system probably removes the broadest spectrum of toxins of any water system that I know of.¹²⁷

This is the same technology used to make the purest bottled water, and it is the only technology capable of desalinating sea water and making it into drinking water. The units either fit on top of your kitchen counter, or you can get a unit that goes under your kitchen sink. While RO units generally cost a bit more than most charcoal filters, the water purity makes it well worth the price.

But whatever method of filtration you use, if you store any of your water for later use, be sure to store it in either clear polyethylene or glass containers, because the one-gallon plastic (PVC) containers transfer far too many chemicals into your water.¹²⁸

Also, if you plan to use baby bottles after your delivery, you will most certainly want to consider using glass bottles in place of plastic ones for similar reasons. Studies have shown that even extremely low levels of a common chemical used in plastics, BPA, produced genetic abnormalities.

BPA has the ability to mimic hormones, and in fact, it was invented in the 1930s during the search for synthetic estrogens, so it is not something you want in your drinking water!

If you want further details on water filters, you can check out the notes at the end of this article for more helpful buying hints, and also visit my site at *Mercola.com*.

Hopefully, all these tips, plus the other information I have provided here, will help to ensure a safe and happy pregnancy for you and your baby, and will also guarantee that your child has a healthy foundation to grow to full adulthood, able to meet all the challenges that life brings.

References:

¹ Just Say No to Nuts during Pregnancy,

<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2008/08/09/just-say-no-to-nuts-during-pregnancy.aspx>, (Accessed January 5, 2009)

² Vital Role of Essential Fatty Acids For Pregnant and Nursing Women,

<http://www.mercola.com/beef/omega3.htm>, (Accessed January 26, 2009)

³ Omega-3 Oils:The Essential Nutrients,

<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2002/03/20/omega3-oils.aspx>, (Accessed January 26, 2009)

⁴ How to Avoid Having a Premature Delivery,

<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2003/11/22/premature-delivery-part-two.aspx>, (Accessed January 26, 2009)

⁵ Pregnant Women May Not be Getting Enough Omega-3,

<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2003/02/12/omega3-pregnancy.aspx>, (Accessed January 7, 2009)

⁶ Beware of Misleading Omega-3 Claims,

<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2007/10/20/beware-of-misleading-omega-3-claims.aspx>, (Accessed January 26, 2009)

⁷ Major Study Shows Fish Oil Fat in Infants Increases Adult Intelligence,

<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2002/05/22/fish-oil-part-five.aspx>, (Accessed January 5, 2009)

⁸ Exercise in Pregnancy Seems Beneficial,

<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2002/04/03/pregnancy-exercise.aspx>, (Accessed January 8, 2009)

⁹ More Omega-3 Studies Find Links to Depression,

<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2004/11/24/omega-3-depression-part-one.aspx>, (Accessed January 6, 2009)

¹⁰ Fish Oil in Pregnancy Treats Depression Risks,

<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2003/06/04/fish-oil-pregnancy-part-one.aspx>, (Accessed January 6, 2009)

¹¹ Cardiovascular Benefits of Omega-3 Fats,

<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2002/03/27/omega3-fats-part-two.aspx>, (Accessed January 7, 2009)

- ¹² Mercury in Your Fish, <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2001/04/25/mercury-fish-part-one.aspx>, (Accessed January 6, 2009)
- ¹³ Pregnant Women May Not be Getting Enough Omega-3, <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2003/02/12/omega3-pregnancy.aspx>, (Accessed January 7, 2009)
- ¹⁴ How to Avoid Having a Premature Delivery, <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2003/11/22/premature-delivery-part-two.aspx>, (Accessed January 26, 2009)
- ¹⁵ Is Krill Oil 48 Times Better Than Fish Oil?, <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2008/08/14/is-krill-oil-48-times-better-than-fish-oil.aspx>, (Accessed January 7, 2009)
- ¹⁶ Stop The Explosion of Premature Births in America With Fish Oil, <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2006/07/27/stop-the-explosion-of-premature-births-in-america-with-fish-oil.aspx>, (Accessed January 5, 2009)
- ¹⁷ Dangerous PCBs Found in Salmon, <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2003/08/02/pcbs-salmon.aspx>, (Accessed January 5, 2009)
- ¹⁸ Fish Oil in Pregnancy Can Prevent Diabetes, <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2003/04/12/fish-oil-part-fourteen.aspx>, (Accessed January 7, 2009)
- ¹⁹ Even If You Live in Sub Tropical Environments You Can Be Vitamin D Deficient, <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2008/03/27/even-if-you-live-in-sub-tropical-environments-you-can-be-vitamin-d-deficient.aspx>, (Accessed January 26, 2009)
- ²⁰ Mercury in Your Fish, <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2001/04/25/mercury-fish-part-one.aspx>, (Accessed January 6, 2009)
- ²¹ Lack of Sunshine Causes One Million Deaths a Year, <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2007/08/24/lack-of-sunshine-causes-600-000-cancers-a-year.aspx>, (Accessed January 26, 2009)
- ²² New York Times Exposes Vitamin D Testing Fraud, <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2009/01/27/new-york-times-exposes-vitamin-d-testing-fraud.aspx>, (Accessed January 26, 2009)
- ²³ Exercise in Pregnancy Seems Beneficial, <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2002/04/03/pregnancy-exercise.aspx>, (Accessed January 5, 2009)

- ²⁴ Vigorous Exercise May Lower Risk of Premature Birth,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2002/12/21/exercise-part-thirteen.aspx>,
(Accessed January 5, 2009)
- ²⁵ Eating for Two During Pregnancy No Longer Recommended,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2005/03/09/eating-for-two.aspx>, (Accessed
January 7, 2009)
- ²⁶ Obesity and Diabetes Include Risk of Birth Defects,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2000/11/19/obesity-birth-defects.aspx>,
(Accessed January 7, 2009)
- ²⁷ Female Infertility Linked to Obesity, http://v.mercola.com/blogs/public_blog/female-infertility-linked-to-obesity-34253.aspx, (Accessed January 7, 2009)
- ²⁸ Will All Americans Be Fat in 40 Years?.
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2008/08/28/will-all-americans-be-fat-in-40-years.aspx>, (Accessed January 7, 2009)
- ²⁹ Are Oversized Moms to Blame for Pudgy Kids?.
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2008/03/25/are-fat-moms-to-blame-for-fat-kids.aspx>, (Accessed January 7, 2009)
- ³⁰ Eating for Two During Pregnancy No Longer Recommended,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2005/03/09/eating-for-two.aspx>, (Accessed
January 7, 2009)
- ³¹ How to Get Inexpensive, Organic, Locally Grown Vegetables,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2006/08/17/how-to-get-inexpensive-organic-locally-grown-vegetables.aspx>, (Accessed January 8, 2009)
- ³² Modify Your Diet So You Feel Terrific,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2003/02/26/metabolic-typing-part-three.aspx>,
(Accessed January 8, 2009)
- ³³ Raw Eggs for Your Health – Major Update,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2002/11/13/eggs-part-two.aspx>, (Accessed
January 8, 2009)
- ³⁴ Don't be Chicken of the Egg,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2000/11/12/eggs-part-one.aspx>, (Accessed
January 7, 2009)
- ³⁵ Pregnancy Nutrients Can Supercharge Your Baby's Brain for Life,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2004/03/31/pregnancy-nutrients.aspx>,
(Accessed January 9, 2009)

- ³⁶ Eggs Improve Bad Cholesterol,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2004/10/13/eggs-cholesterol.aspx>, (Accessed January 7, 2009)
- ³⁷ Eating for Two During Pregnancy No Longer Recommended,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2005/03/09/eating-for-two.aspx>, (Accessed January 7, 2009)
- ³⁸ The Truth Behind the Vaccine Coverup, Part 5 (of 5),
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2004/10/06/blaylock-vaccine-coverup-part-five.aspx>, (Accessed January 27, 2009)
- ³⁹ PEDIATRICS, November 2003, 112:5,1039-1048, Safety of Thimerosal-Containing Vaccines: A Two-Phased Study of Computerized Health Maintenance Organization Databases, Thomas Verstraeten, MD, Robert L. Davis, MD, MPH, Frank DeStefano, MD, MPH, Tracy A. Lieu, MD, MPH, Philip H. Rhodes, PhD, Steven B. Black, MD, Henry Shinefield, MD, Robert T. Chen, MD,
<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/abstract/112/5/1039>, (Accessed January 29, 2009)
- ⁴⁰ Centers for Disease Control (CDC), February 2008, Mercury and Vaccines (Thimerosal),
<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/concerns/thimerosal.htm>, (Accessed January 29, 2009)
- ⁴¹ A User-Friendly Vaccination Schedule,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2004/12/29/vaccination-schedule-part-one.aspx>, (Accessed January 28, 2009)
- ⁴² Chewing Gum Releases Mercury From Dental Fillings,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2001/01/21/mercury-gum.aspx>, (Accessed January 28, 2009)
- ⁴³ FDA Website, Questions and Answers on Dental Amalgam,
<http://www.fda.gov/cdrh/consumer/amalgams.html>, (Accessed January 28, 2009)
- ⁴⁴ Lies, Damn Lies and Statistics About Mercury, Part II, Dr. Russell Blaylock,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2005/02/26/mercury-lies-part-two.aspx>, (Accessed January 28, 2009)
- ⁴⁵ Hazardous Levels of Mercury in Sushi,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2008/02/14/hazardous-levels-of-mercury-in-sushi.aspx>, (Accessed January 28, 2009)
- ⁴⁶ Detoxification Protocol # 1 for Replacement of Mercury-Containing Fillings and for Mercury Related Symptoms, <http://www.mgoldmandds.com/detox1.htm>, (Accessed January 28, 2009)
- ⁴⁷ Vitamin C Detoxifies Oxidized Fat, 2001, Jan Frederik Stevens, Ph.D.,
<http://lpi.oregonstate.edu/ss05/oxidizedfat.html>, (Accessed January 27, 2009)

- ⁴⁸ Michael C. Goldman, DDS, Protocol for Replacement of Mercury-Containing Fillings and for Mercury-Related Symptoms, <http://www.mgoldmandds.com/detox1.htm>, (Accessed January 27, 2009)
- ⁴⁹ Vigorous Exercise May Lower Risk of Premature Birth, <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2002/12/21/exercise-part-thirteen.aspx>, (Accessed January 5, 2009)
- ⁵⁰ Exercise in Pregnancy Seems Beneficial, <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2002/04/03/pregnancy-exercise.aspx>, (Accessed January 5, 2009)
- ⁵¹ Pesticide Link to Autism Suspected - A State Study Suggests Two Farm Sprays May Raise Chances of Having a Child with the Disorder, <http://articles.latimes.com/2007/jul/30/local/me-autism30>, (Accessed January 6, 2009)
- ⁵² Environmental Health News, Number 116 (2008) 566-572, Andersen HR, IM Schmidt, P Grandjean, TK Jensen, E Budtz-Joergensen, MB Kjaerstad, J Baelum, JB Nielsen, NE Skakkebaek and KM Main, Pesticide Exposure during Pregnancy Increases Chances of Reproductive Disorders in Sons, <http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/newscience/pesticides-exposure-increase-risks-of-male-reproductive-disorders>, (Accessed January 8, 2009)
- ⁵³ Agricultural Pesticides Linked to Miscarriage, <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2001/02/28/pesticides-miscarriage.aspx>, (Accessed January 8, 2009)
- ⁵⁴ Pesticides May Cause Learning Problems, <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2000/09/24/pesticides-brain.aspx>, (Accessed January 8, 2009)
- ⁵⁵ Agricultural Pesticides Linked to Fetal Death, <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2001/02/24/pesticides-fetal-death.aspx>, (Accessed January 8, 2009)
- ⁵⁶ Cleaning Products Can Harm Your Children, <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2005/01/08/cleaning-products.aspx>, (Accessed January 8, 2009)
- ⁵⁷ Cleaning Products Can Harm Your Children, <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2005/01/08/cleaning-products.aspx>, (Accessed January 8, 2009)
- ⁵⁸ Eco-friendly Spring Cleaning, <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2001/04/28/household-chemicals.aspx>, (Accessed January 9, 2009)
- ⁵⁹ Journal of Toxicology and Environmental Health, 34:197-206, 1991, Urinary Mutagens in Cosmetologists and Dental Personnel, <http://www.chem-tox.com/pregnancy/pregcosm.htm>, (Accessed January 27, 2009)

- ⁶⁰ Environmental Causes of Learning Disabilities and Child Neurological Disorders, http://www.chem-tox.com/pregnancy/learning_disabilities.htm, (Accessed January 26, 2009)
- ⁶¹ Cosmetic Use in Pregnancy, <http://www.chem-tox.com/pregnancy/pregcosm.htm>, (Accessed January 26, 2009)
- ⁶² The Toxic Chemicals in Your Home They Aren't Telling You About, <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2004/07/31/toxins-home.aspx>, (Accessed January 12, 2009)
- ⁶³ Gum Disease May Increase Risk of Premature Birth, <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2000/06/17/gums-premature-birth.aspx>, (Accessed January 26, 2009)
- ⁶⁴ Low Dietary Vitamin C Can Increase Risk for Periodontal Disease, <http://www.perio.org/consumer/vitamin.c.htm>, (Accessed January 9, 2009)
- ⁶⁵ BBC News, UK version, December 25, 2005, Grapefruit 'May Cut Gum Disease,' <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/4554796.stm>, (Accessed January 9, 2009)
- ⁶⁶ Lack of Vitamin C May Trigger Premature Delivery, <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2002/01/30/premature-delivery-part-one.aspx>, (Accessed January 9, 2009)
- ⁶⁷ Revolutionhealth, September 7, 2006, Vitamin C, <http://www.revolutionhealth.com/healthy-living/vitamin-index/vitamin-c-hn>, (Accessed January 9, 2009)
- ⁶⁸ The Ester-C Bioavailability Study Report, 1998, Jeffrey Bland, PhD, <http://lib.store.yahoo.net/lib/yhst-65052264226661/cf074.pdf>, (Accessed January 26, 2009)
- ⁶⁹ Last Interview with Dr. Pauling, <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2001/03/28/dr-pauling.aspx>, (Accessed January 9, 2009)
- ⁷⁰ Nutritional Influences on Periodontal Disease, http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0ISW/is_/ai_n13790765, (Accessed January 26, 2009)
- ⁷¹ Acta Univ Palacki Olomuc Fac Med. 1990;125:173-9, Cerná H, et al., Periodontium and Vitamins E and A in Pregnancy, <http://stanford.wellsphere.com/heart-health-article/plaque-plaque-and-more-plaque-reversal/110100>, (Accessed January 26, 2009)
- ⁷² J Dentistry Res, 1968; 47;925, R.C. Kestenbaum, Bacterial Specificity in the Etiology of Caries and Periodontal Disease, <http://jdr.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/47/6/925.pdf>, (Accessed January 26, 2009)
- ⁷³ Gum Disease May Increase Risk of Premature Birth, <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2000/06/17/gums-premature-birth.aspx>, (Accessed January 26, 2009)

- ⁷⁴ At Last Harmful Cosmetic Chemicals are Getting a Closer Look,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2005/10/22/at-last-harmful-cosmetic-chemicals-are-getting-a-closer-look.aspx>, (Accessed January 27, 2009)
- ⁷⁵ Males of All Species are Becoming More Female,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2009/01/01/males-of-all-species-are-becoming-more-female.aspx>
- ⁷⁶ Plastic Exposure May Lead to Premature Delivery,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2003/11/22/plastic-exposure.aspx>, (Accessed January 9, 2009)
- ⁷⁷ Why Plastics Can Make You Sick,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2005/04/27/plastics.aspx>, (Accessed January 28, 2009)
- ⁷⁸ 5 Ways to Keep BPA Out of Your Food,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2008/10/07/5-ways-to-keep-bpa-out-of-your-food.aspx>, (Accessed January 28, 2009)
- ⁷⁹ Warning: Teflon Can Cause Birth Defects & Infertility,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2003/04/19/teflon-part-two.aspx>, (Accessed January 9, 2009)
- ⁸⁰ EPA Says Teflon Could Put Your Health at Risk,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2005/02/02/teflon-part-four.aspx>, (Accessed January 28, 2009)
- ⁸¹ More Ways Teflon Can Harm Your Baby,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2007/03/20/more-ways-teflon-can-harm-your-baby.aspx>, (Accessed January 28, 2009)
- ⁸² Teflon Finds Itself in Sticky Situation,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2004/10/23/teflon-part-three.aspx>, (Accessed January 28, 2009)
- ⁸³ Finally U.S. Government Acknowledges How Dangerous Teflon Is,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2006/02/28/finally-us-government-acknowledges-how-dangerous-teflon-is.aspx>, (Accessed January 28, 2009)
- ⁸⁴ Eating Breakfast is Every Bit as Important as Your Mom Told You,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2003/03/26/breakfast-part-three.aspx>, (Accessed January 12, 2009)
- ⁸⁵ Food Allergies -- Do You Have Unexplained Symptoms?,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2007/07/13/food-allergies-do-you-have-unexplained-symptoms.aspx>, (Accessed January 12, 2009)

- ⁸⁶ Modify Your Diet So You Feel Terrific,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2003/02/26/metabolic-typing-part-three.aspx>,
(Accessed January 8, 2009)
- ⁸⁷ Why You Are More Creative After You Sleep,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2008/10/25/why-you-are-more-creative-after-you-sleep.aspx>, (Accessed January 28, 2009)
- ⁸⁸ If You Sleep Less Than Six Hours You Are Creating a 'Sleep Debt',
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2003/03/29/sleep-debt.aspx>, (Accessed January 9, 2009)
- ⁸⁹ Get Enough Sleep to Avoid Diabetes,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2003/03/08/sleep-diabetes.aspx>, (Accessed January 9, 2009)
- ⁹⁰ Lack of Sleep Strongly Linked to Obesity,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2004/12/01/sleep-obesity.aspx>, (Accessed January 9, 2009)
- ⁹¹ Want to Prevent Cancer? Make Sure You Sleep Well,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2003/10/22/cancer-sleep.aspx>, (Accessed January 9, 2009)
- ⁹² New Information on the Science of Sleep,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2008/04/10/new-information-on-the-science-of-sleep.aspx>, (Accessed January 28, 2009)
- ⁹³ Sleep Smarter, sleepsmarter.wordpress.com/2008/03/26/sleep-smarter-tip-1/, (Accessed January 9, 2009)
- ⁹⁴ 33 Secrets to a Good Night's Sleep, <http://www.mercola.com/article/sleep.htm>, (Accessed January 9, 2009)
- ⁹⁵ The Benefits of Probiotics,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2004/09/29/probiotics-benefits.aspx>,
(Accessed January 12, 2009)
- ⁹⁶ Beneficial Bacteria (Probiotics) May Halt Allergies In Babies,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2001/04/14/probiotics-part-one.aspx>,
(Accessed January 12, 2009)
- ⁹⁷ The Truth about Antibacterial Soaps – And Why You Should Avoid Them,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2004/03/20/antibacterial-soaps-part-two.aspx>,
(Accessed January 12, 2009)

- ⁹⁸ "Hygiene Hypothesis" of Asthma Gaining Support,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2000/06/10/hygeine-asthma.aspx>, (Accessed January 12, 2009)
- ⁹⁹ Washing Your Hands with an Antibacterial Soap Can be Very Toxic,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2007/03/17/washing-your-hands-with-an-antibacterial-soap-can-be-very-toxic.aspx>, (Accessed January 27, 2009)
- ¹⁰⁰ Natural News, March 15, 2007, David Gutierrez, Antibacterial Soap Ingredient Triclosan May Be Harmful to Humans, <http://www.naturalnews.com/021703.html>, (Accessed January 27, 2009)
- ¹⁰¹ Why You Want to Avoid Using Chemical Disinfectants,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2008/10/25/why-you-want-to-avoid-using-chemical-disinfectants.aspx>, (Accessed January 28, 2009)
- ¹⁰² Using Antibacterial Soap May Disrupt Your Hormones,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2006/12/02/using-antibacterial-soap-may-disrupt-your-hormones.aspx>, (Accessed January 28, 2009)
- ¹⁰³ Cell Phone Use During Pregnancy Can Seriously Damage Your Baby,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2008/06/03/cell-phone-use-during-pregnancy-can-seriously-damage-your-baby.aspx>, (Accessed January 12, 2009)
- ¹⁰⁴ Medscape, June 26, 2000, George L. Carlo, PhD, MS, JD, and Rebecca Steffens Jenrow, MPH, Scientific Progress - Wireless Phones and Brain Cancer,
http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/408066_5, (Accessed January 28, 2009)
- ¹⁰⁵ How Cell Phones May Cause Autism,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2007/11/27/how-cell-phones-may-cause-autism.aspx>, (Accessed January 12, 2009)
- ¹⁰⁶ Cordless Phones Increase Your Brain Cancer Risks.
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2006/03/21/cordless-phones-increase-your-brain-cancer-risks.aspx>, (Accessed January 12, 2009)
- ¹⁰⁷ The Evidence Against Soy, <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2008/10/07/the-evidence-against-soy.aspx>, (Accessed January 28, 2009)
- ¹⁰⁸ Just Say No to Nuts during Pregnancy,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2008/08/09/just-say-no-to-nuts-during-pregnancy.aspx>, (Accessed January 5, 2009)
- ¹⁰⁹ Soy May Cause Cancer and Brain Damage,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2000/08/20/soy-dangers-part-two.aspx>, (Accessed January 5, 2009)
- ¹¹⁰ How Caffeine During Pregnancy Can Damage Your Baby,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2009/01/03/how-caffeine-during-pregnancy-can-damage-your-baby.aspx>, (Accessed January 12, 2009)

- ¹¹¹ Store your Food in Glass, not Plastic,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2003/04/16/food-storage-part-one.aspx>,
(Accessed January 27, 2009)
- ¹¹² Pregnant Women Need to Avoid Caffeine,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2001/10/20/pregnancy-caffeine.aspx>,
(Accessed January 12, 2009)
- ¹¹³ Just Say No to Nuts during Pregnancy,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2008/08/09/just-say-no-to-nuts-during-pregnancy.aspx>, (Accessed January 5, 2009)
- ¹¹⁴ The Not-so-Sweet Reality Behind Artificial Sweeteners,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2005/05/31/artificial-sweeteners-part-three.aspx>, (Accessed January 13. 2009)
- ¹¹⁵ NutraSweet Shown to Cause Cancer,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2006/04/04/nutrasweet-shown-to-cause-cancer.aspx>, (Accessed January 13. 2009)
- ¹¹⁶ Splenda is Not a Healthy Sweetener,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2003/08/23/splenda-part-one.aspx>, (Accessed January 12. 2009)
- ¹¹⁷ Beware of Splenda's Latest Marketing Ploy,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2004/07/14/splenda-marketing-part-one.aspx>,
(Accessed January 28. 2009)
- ¹¹⁸ Stevia: The 'Holy Grail' of Sweeteners?,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2008/12/16/stevia-the-holy-grail-of-sweeteners.aspx>, (Accessed January 13. 2009)
- ¹¹⁹ FDA Approves Two New Stevia-based Sweeteners,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2009/01/10/fda-approves-two-new-stevia-based-sweeteners.aspx>, (Accessed January 13. 2009)
- ¹²⁰ Vitamin Research News, Carolyn Pierini, CLS CNC, Xylitol, A Sweet Alternative,
<http://www.vrp.com/articles.aspx?ProdID=art673&zTYPE=2>, (Accessed January 13. 2009)
- ¹²¹ Vitamin Research News, Ward Dean, MD, Xylitol - Sweetener May Support Bone Health,
<http://www.vrp.com/articles.aspx?ProdID=art717&zTYPE=2>, (Accessed January 13. 2009)
- ¹²² Drink More Spring or Filtered Water to Improve Every Facet of Your Health,
<http://www.mercola.com/article/water.htm>, (Accessed January 13. 2009).
- ¹²³ Beware of Lead in Your Tap Water,
<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2004/03/13/lead-water.aspx>, (Accessed January 13. 2009)

¹²⁴ A Special Interview with Robert Slovak by Dr. Mercola, Toxic Dangers in Your Tap Water, (Accessed January 26, 2009)

¹²⁵ Issues: Bottled Water, April 2008, <http://www.nrdc.org/water/drinking/qbw.asp#tap>, (Accessed January 29, 2009)

¹²⁶ Environmental Working Group, October 2008, Olga Naidenko, PhD, Nneka Leiba, MPH, Renee Sharp, MS, Jane Houlihan, MSCE Bottled Water Quality Investigation: 10 Major Brands, 38 Pollutants, <http://www.ewg.org/reports/bottledwater>, (Accessed January 29, 2009)

¹²⁷ Heartspring.net, 2008, A Guide to Water Filters: The Simple Yet Effective Carbon Water Filters, http://heartspring.net/water_filters_guide.html#charcoal,

(Accessed January 29, 2009)

¹²⁸ Reverse Osmosis Water Filter Guide, <http://www.reverse-osmosis-water-filter-guide.com/reverse-osmosis-ro-water-filter-systems.html>, (Accessed January 29, 2009)

¹²⁹ Store Your Food in Glass Not Plastic, <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2003/04/16/food-storage-part-one.aspx>, (Accessed January 29, 2009)

Related Links:

- » [How Caffeine During Pregnancy Can Damage Your Baby](#)
- » [Have You Heard the Latest on Exercise During Pregnancy?](#)
- » [Cell Phone Use During Pregnancy Can Seriously Damage Your Baby](#)

Reference website: <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2009/11/07/No-Nonsense-Guide-to-a-Naturally-Healthy-Pregnancy-and-Baby.aspx>