

Appendix I

Food Safety During Pregnancy

Fish:

Eating fish during pregnancy and while breastfeeding provides omega 3 fatty acids, which enhance fetal brain and eye development. This benefit outweighs the risk of mercury or other contaminants if the following guidelines are followed:

- Avoid large, predatory fish, which contain higher levels of mercury than smaller fish. These include shark, swordfish, tilefish and king mackerel.
- Limit consumption of other fish (e.g. shrimp, salmon, trout, sardines, cod, catfish, tilapia, light tuna etc.) to 12 ounces per week. Limit albacore tuna and tuna steaks, which contain more mercury than light tuna, to 6 ounces per week.
- Follow state health department advisories for fish consumption from local waters. If this information is not available, limit to 6 ounces per week, and avoid other fish during the week.

Foodborne Illnesses:

During pregnancy, the immune system is weaker and women may be more susceptible to parasitic or bacterial (e.g. E. coli, listeria, salmonella, vibrial) infections. To reduce risk,

Avoid :

- Raw fish (oysters, sushi, sashimi, ceviche).
- Unpasteurized/raw milk
- Cheeses made from unpasteurized milk. Check the label to make sure soft cheeses such as brie, feta, camembert, blue, queso blanco, queso fresca are made from pasteurized milk.
- Raw or undercooked eggs, including cookie dough, cake batter, home-made eggnog. (Make sure yolks and whites are cooked until firm).
- Raw or undercooked sprouts (e.g mung bean, alfalfa)
- Raw (e.g. steak tartare) or undercooked meat, fish or poultry. (Cook fish, beef, veal and lamb to 145 ° F, pork, ground beef to 160 ° F and poultry to 165 °F. Cook stuffing separately from poultry).
Use a meat thermometer since color is not a reliable indicator of doneness.
- Meat spreads, pates or smoked seafood sold in refrigerator sections of stores. (canned products are safe).
- Deli ham, seafood or chicken salads.
- Hot dogs, cold cuts, luncheon meats, dry sausages unless reheated until steaming or 165 ° F.

Practice Safe Food Handling Techniques:

- Wash hands for 20 seconds with warm, soapy water before and after handling food.
- Keep work surfaces and utensils clean-wash after each use with hot, soapy water
- Keep raw meat and poultry away from other foods.
- Always use a clean plate for cooked foods. Never place cooked foods on an unwashed plate that held raw meat, fish, poultry or eggs.
- Avoid cross-contamination by using a separate cutting board for meats, fish, poultry; and fruits, vegetables
- Wash fruits and vegetables well before eating
- Thaw frozen foods in the refrigerator, under cold water or in the microwave on the defrost setting-never at room temperature.
- Keep perishable foods and leftovers out of the “danger zone” (between 40 and 140° F) to minimize bacterial growth. Refrigerate within 2 hours (1 hour if the temperature is above 90°) below 40° F and use within 4 days or freeze.
- Place cooked food or leftovers into shallow containers to facilitate cooling in the refrigerator.

Sources: USFDA, USEPA: What you need to know about mercury in fish and shellfish Advice for women who might become pregnant, women who are pregnant, nursing mothers, young children, 2004; USDA My Pyramid.gov. Food Safety Advice for Everyone; Women’s Health.gov ,National Women’s Health Information Center. Food Don’ts –Healthy Pregnancy; Food Safety, gov, Checklist of Foods to Avoid During Pregnancy.