

MYTH:
"FORMULA IS BETTER FOR BABY
THAN BREAST MILK."

Modern formulas are only superficially similar to breast milk. Breast milk contains antibodies, living cells, enzymes and hormones. Breast milk contains less aluminum, manganese, cadmium, lead, iron and protein. Breast milk varies from the beginning of the feed to the end of the feed from day 1 to day 7 to day 30, from woman to woman and from baby to baby. In addition to providing nutrients, breast milk also has long-term health benefits.

MYTH:
"PREGNANT WOMEN CRAVE PICKLES
AND ICE CREAM."

Women who crave pickles are really craving salt and may be mineral deficient, and specifically sodium deficient. Additional minerals are particularly important in pregnancy when women's bodies increase blood volume by up to 20 percent, so the existing minerals are diluted.

Many women crave junk foods such as ice cream during pregnancy because junk food is associated with comfort. Sugars found in sweet foods, as well as in breads, pasta and rice cause the body to produce serotonin, which makes women feel good.



MYTH:
"YOU LOSE A TOOTH FOR EVERY
BABY."

Today, with the availability of supplements and fortified foods, no woman should lose a tooth for every baby.

Preconception nutrition is critical for preserving maternal health. It is during the critical pre-adolescent and adolescent years that women build stores of iron and calcium that prepare them for childbearing. If a woman's diet is deficient in these key minerals, the demands of the growing baby often take precedence.

During pregnancy, calcium may be lost from the maternal bones and teeth. Women should take in 1,500 mg of calcium each day, either from food sources or supplements. Teeth can be lost if stores are deficient or depleted due to malnutrition or close interconceptional periods.

MYTH:
"SLEEPING ON YOUR BACK CAN
HURT THE BABY."

For normal, healthy pregnant women, any sleep position is safe for the baby. So, unless directed otherwise by a physician, a pregnant woman should choose the position that is most comfortable for her.

MYTH:
"GENDER OF BABY-HEARTBEATS?
ROUND OR FULL FACE? SWING OF A
PENDANT? PRESENCE OF ACNE?
PLACEMENT OF A KEY?"

The gender of the baby can be detected with a prenatal ultrasound. Ultrasounds may not be as fun as some of the myths associated with gender detection, but it's definitely more accurate.

**HERE'S WHEN YOU
SHOULD BEWARE:**

- **WHEN THE MYTH SUGGESTS THAT YOU CONTRADICT YOUR DOCTOR'S MEDICAL TREATMENT (SUCH AS DISCONTINUING PRENATAL VITAMINS)**
- **WHEN THE MYTH SUGGESTS THAT YOU INGEST OR INHALE SOMETHING THAT ISN'T RECOMMENDED BY YOUR DOCTOR (SUCH AS HERBS OR DRUGS)**
- **WHEN THE MYTH MAKES YOU EXTREMELY FEARFUL FOR YOUR BABY'S HEALTH (STRESS ON THE MOTHER CAN ADVERSELY AFFECT THE BABY)**




Missouri Bootheel Regional Consortium Inc.
Strengthen, Promote, Empower
Families and Communities

MBHS is a program of MBRC, Inc.

903 S. Kingshighway, Suite A • PO Box 947
Sikeston, MO 63801

(573) 471-9400 • Toll Free: 1 (888) 317-4949

mbrinc.org

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**CULTURAL
GENERATIONAL
PREGNANCY
MYTHS**



**OLD WIVES' TALES
HANDLED DOWN
FROM GENERATION
TO GENERATION**

MYTH:
"PREGNANT WOMEN SHOULD NOT TAKE BATHS."

Baths are very good for pregnant women. The problem is more the temperature than the actual bath. Hot tubs and hot baths (above 100 degrees F) should be avoided. These can cause body temperature to rise, and this can cause problems for a developing baby, particularly in the first trimester.

Baths are a great source of relaxation and also work well for the aches and pains of pregnancy. The baby is not in danger of getting germs from bathing. The amniotic sac and the mucous plug protect the baby.

MYTH:
"DON'T BEGIN ANY EXERCISE THAT YOU WERE NOT ALREADY DOING BEFORE YOU GOT PREGNANT."

It's important to start a pregnancy exercise program carefully and seek the advice of a care provider. Pregnancy and labor represent some of the most difficult and rewarding work a woman will ever do. It makes sense to prepare oneself physically. If the mother hasn't been participating in a regular program of exercise, walking is a good place to start. Other options include joining a prenatal exercise or yoga class and build it into a support group and even future playgroup.

MYTH:
"DON'T RAISE YOUR HANDS OVER YOUR HEAD. THE CORD WILL WRAP AROUND THE BABY AND CHOKE HIM."

The baby can get caught up in its umbilical cord (which happens in about one-third of births). This may occur because the baby was very fidgety and moved around, not because the mother raised her arms above her head.

MYTH:
"YOU CAN'T TAKE ANY MEDICATION AT ALL."

It seems that some women don't heed advice about stopping the use of harmful substances in pregnancy (can you believe that nearly 15% of pregnant women continue to drink alcohol?) whereas other women will suffer great discomfort from conditions as diverse as pain, allergies, yeast infections, etc. to avoid taking any medications at all. There are many medications over-the-counter and prescriptions known to be safe in pregnancy; as with any medication issues, ask your clinician or pharmacist.

MYTH:
"ONLY GO TO THE DOCTOR WHEN YOU'RE FEELING SICK OR NEED MEDICINE."

Doctors and health care providers are able to provide valuable information on health topics and resources. They have expertise to monitor growth and development of the child at certain stages of pregnancy. They order screenings and tests for conditions that may occur. They can detect problems before the mother is aware of them. In addition to providing emotional support, health care providers may assist in relieving fears and anxieties.

MYTH:
"AVOID SPICY FOODS- THEY CAN TRIGGER LABOR BEFORE YOU ARE READY."

For the most part, pregnant women can eat just about anything, but there are certain foods that should be eaten cautiously or avoided. Those include very soft cheeses, unpasteurized cheeses and raw milk cheese. Though rare, they may contain a bacteria called lysteria that has been associated with miscarriage or pre-term labor.

MYTH:
"THE BABY WILL CHOKE TO DEATH ON HER BACK."

"THE BABY'S HEAD WILL BECOME FLAT AND MAKE HIM CRAZY IF HE IS PLACED ON HIS BACK."

The safest sleep position for a baby is on his/her back. Always place the baby on his/her back for naps and at night.

MYTH:
"SEX WILL MAKE YOU GO INTO LABOR."

"SEX, DURING PREGNANCY, WILL HARM YOUR BABY."

Within the bounds of common sense, there is no recommendation to avoid sex during pregnancy. The baby is protected in the uterus so that sex is unlikely to cause problems. If the pregnancy is complicated by bleeding, pre-term labor or other problems, it may be recommended that sex and certain exercises are avoided. Ask your doctor.

MYTH:
"PREGNANT WOMEN MUST EAT FOR TWO."

While a pregnant woman's appetite may increase significantly during early pregnancy, her actual caloric needs are only slightly increased during this trimester. She should be sensible about her food intake. Check USDA dietary guideline.

MYTH:
"IF YOU GET A LOT OF HEARTBURN, YOUR BABY WILL HAVE A LOT OF HAIR."

Heartburn is common during pregnancy because, as the stomach is pushed higher by the growing baby and the expanding uterus, it becomes easier for acid to move backwards (or "reflux") from the stomach into the lower esophagus. Acid is irritating to the esophagus and causes the discomfort we know as heartburn. Remaining upright after eating, sleeping with the head of the bed at a slight elevation, and antacid medications (many of which are considered safe during pregnancy) can be helpful. A care provider should be consulted before taking any medications during pregnancy, including over-the-counter remedies.

