

# Caffeine in pregnancy

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Remember, the information on this fact sheet should not be used or relied on as an alternative to professional care. If you have a particular problem, see your health care professional.

## **Caffeine during pregnancy**

It's best to limit the amount of caffeine-containing drinks you have during pregnancy. Drinks that contain caffeine include coffee, tea, cola drinks and some other soft drinks, including 'energy' drinks.

- Too much caffeine affects your nervous system and can make you irritable and nervous, and make it difficult for you to go to sleep.
- Occasionally it may cause a rapid heartbeat.

You don't need to give up your morning coffee fix altogether, but try to limit yourself to no more than 2 weak cups of coffee, or 4 cups of tea a day. Try substituting a decaffeinated coffee for some of your regular cups of coffee.

If you want cola drinks, keep the amount you drink less than one litre of cola drink or less than one can of an 'energy' drink. Diet drinks may be best as regular cola drinks contain a lot of sugar.

It is important for pregnant women to drink enough water, milk and juice. These drinks should not be replaced with drinks that have caffeine in them.

## **Caffeine risks in pregnancy**

About one in five of all recognised pregnancies end in a miscarriage.

Drinking high amounts of caffeine may make miscarriage more likely.

Low to moderate intake of caffeine does not appear to increase the risk of a miscarriage.

With each pregnancy all women have a 3% to 5% chance of having a baby with a birth defect. In humans, even large amounts of caffeine do not appear to cause an increased risk of birth defects.

## **To find out more about Caffeine**

OTIS (Organisation of Teratology Information Specialists)  
'Caffeine in pregnancy'  
<http://www.otispregnancy.org/otis-fact-sheets-s13037>

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For more information on this topic or any issues related to pregnancy, birth or babies, call the free 24 hour helpline:

**1800 882 436**

