Caffeine During Pregnancy

Caffeine is one of the most loved stimulants in America! But now that you are pregnant, you may need to lighten up on the daily intake of your favorite drinks and treats.

Facts About Caffeine:
Caffeine is a stimulant and a diuretic. Because caffeine is a stimulant, it increases your blood pressure and heart rate, both of which are not recommended during pregnancy. Caffeine also increases the frequency of urination. This causes reduction in your body fluid levels and can lead to dehydration.

Caffeine crosses the placenta to your baby. Although you may be able to handle the amounts of caffeine you feed your body, your baby cannot. Your baby’s metabolism is still maturing and cannot fully metabolize the caffeine. Any amount of caffeine can also cause changes in your baby’s sleep pattern or normal movement pattern in the later stages of pregnancy. Remember, caffeine is a stimulant and can keep both you and your baby awake.

Caffeine is found in more than just coffee. Caffeine is not only found in coffee but also in tea, soda, chocolate, and even some over-the-counter medications which relieve headaches. Be aware of what you consume.

Fact or Myth?

Statement: Caffeine causes birth defects in humans.
Facts: Numerous studies on animals have shown that caffeine can cause birth defects, preterm delivery, reduced fertility, and increase the risk of low-birth weight offspring and other reproductive problems. There have not been any conclusive studies done on humans though. It is still better to play it safe when it comes to inconclusive studies.

Statement: Caffeine causes infertility.
Facts: Some studies have shown a link between high levels of caffeine consumption and delayed conception.
Statement: Caffeine causes miscarriages.
Facts: In 2008, two studies on the effects of caffeine related to miscarriage showed significantly different outcomes. In one study released by the American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology, it was found that women who consume 200mg or more of caffeine daily, are twice as likely to have a miscarriage as those who do not consume any caffeine.

In another study released by Epidemiology, there was no increased risk in women who drank a minimal amount of coffee daily (between 200-350mg per day.)

Due to conflicting conclusions from numerous studies, the March of Dimes states that until more conclusive studies are done, pregnant women should limit caffeine intake to less than 200 mg per day. This is equal to about one 12 oz cup of coffee.

Statement: A pregnant woman should not consume ANY caffeine
Facts: Experts have stated that moderate levels of caffeine have not been found to have a negative effect on pregnancy. The definition of moderate varies anywhere from 150 mg - 300 mg a day.

How much caffeine is in your favorite drinks & snacks?
- Starbucks Grande Coffee (16 oz) 400 mg
- Starbucks House Blend Coffee (16 oz) 259 mg
- Dr. Pepper (12 oz) 37 mg
- 7 Eleven Big Gulp Diet Coke (32 oz) 124 mg
- 7 Eleven Big Gulp Coca-Cola (32 oz) 92 mg
- Ben & Jerry's Coffee Buzz Ice Cream (8 oz) 72 mg
- Baker's chocolate (1 oz) 26 mg
- Green tea (6 oz) 40 mg
- Black tea (6 oz) 45 mg
- Excedrin (per capsule) 65mg

How much caffeine is too much?
The less caffeine you consume, the better. Some experts say more than 150 mg of caffeine a day is too much, while others say more than 300 mg a day is too much. Avoiding caffeine as much as possible is your safest course of action. If you must get your fix, it is best to discuss this with your health care provider to make the healthiest choice for you and your baby.

For more information, visit AmericanPregnancy.org