

[IMAGE]

## Spontaneous Abortion: Caffeine May Be a Culprit

Spontaneous abortion is defined as "a spontaneously occurring termination of pregnancy before the 20th week with expulsion of the fetus." Research aimed at preventing spontaneous abortions has focused on several potential culprits, including caffeine - a substance known to pass readily through the placenta to the fetus.

A study in *The New England Journal of Medicine* investigated this premise, dividing 1,515 women into two groups for comparison. The first group included 562 women who had suffered spontaneous abortion at 6-12 weeks' gestation; the second group consisted of 953 women who had not suffered spontaneous abortion. Interviews served to gather data on sources and amount of caffeine intake, including coffee; tea; cocoa; chocolate; soft drinks; and caffeine-containing medications. Smoking status, a potential conflicting variable (because of its influence on birth outcomes), was also determined.

Among nonsmokers, spontaneous abortion occurred at a significantly higher rate in women who ingested at least 100 milligrams of caffeine per day, compared to women who ingested less than 100 mg per day. Among smokers, caffeine ingestion was not associated with an increased risk of spontaneous abortion. The authors note that the first group consisted mostly of women who had suffered spontaneous abortions in the second trimester, and suggest that caffeine may be even more detrimental to the developing fetus in the first trimester.

If you're expecting a child, talk to your doctor about what steps you can take to ensure a smooth pregnancy and delivery. For more information on women's health, visit <http://www.chiroweb.com/tyh/women.html>.

### *Reference:*

Cnattingius S, Signorello LB, Anneren G, et al. Caffeine intake and the risk of first-trimester spontaneous abortion. *The New England Journal of Medicine* 2000: Vol. 343, No. 25, pp1839-45.

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