

[IMAGE]

Don't Risk Your Health (or the Health of Your Child)

By Editorial Staff

A healthy pregnancy and a healthy child – who doesn't want that? And yet many women put themselves and their developing child at risk, often without knowing it. You deserve better. Your child deserves better. Here are two of the health issues you can help avoid based on the lifestyle choices you make:

Heart defects linked to ADHD drugs: Use of attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) drugs during pregnancy increasing the risk that the child will develop a cardiac malformation (heart defect, in laypersons terms) . Exposure to methylphenidate after the first trimester increased the risk by 28 percent, according to research summarized in *JAMA Psychiatry*. Findings emphasize the need to better understand the safety issues surrounding use of ADHD drugs, particularly during pregnancy, and explore potential drug-free options for treating ADHD.

mom and baby - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark *Obesity and fetal growth patterns:* Obese women are more likely to have unusually large babies, even if the mother's obesity isn't causing health complications. The result, according to the study in *JAMA Pediatrics*: a large, heavy baby, particularly a baby with a large head circumference, and larger thigh and arm bones, compared to babies born to normal-weight mothers. Larger babies may complicate the delivery process and require Cesarean delivery, which can risk the health of both mother and child. Fortunately, in the vast majority of cases obesity can be managed with proper diet, exercise and other lifestyle changes.

If you're expecting a child or planning to conceive, talk to your doctor early in the process about everything you can do (and avoid doing) to ensure a healthy childbirth for mother and child. And if you're currently taking ADHD drugs and/or are struggling with weight issues, you deserve to have the same conversation with your doctor regarding natural options to improve your health and wellness.

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