

[IMAGE]

Caffeine: Bad for Baby

By Editorial Staff

No, we're not talking about your infant or toddler drinking caffeine; it's the expectant mother who's our focus. Add caffeine to the list of things pregnant moms should avoid – or at least limit severely – for the health of their soon-to-be-born child, according to new research. Here's why.

Maternal caffeine consumption appears to negatively impact neonatal anthropometric measurements. In layperson's terms, we're talking about birth weight; length; head, abdominal, arm and thigh circumference; and skin fold and fat mass measures. According to the study that yielded these findings, it didn't take very much caffeine to cause a problem; consumption even in amounts less than the currently recommended 200 mg limit per day increased the risk of delivering a smaller baby relative to the above anthropomorphic variables. In fact, compared with women who reported drinking no caffeinated beverages, women who consumed as little as approximately 50 mg per day (only about 1/2 a cup of caffeinated coffee) had an increased risk of delivering a smaller child.

Why is this a problem? The study authors suggest one reason based on previous investigations: "Even low maternal caffeine intake (>50 mg/d) is associated with higher risk of excess growth in infancy and overweight in early childhood and altered fat deposition that may put children of caffeine consumers at higher risk of later cardiometabolic disease."

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