

[IMAGE]

## Is Seafood Good for Expectant Moms?

Premature births, or births before 37 weeks of pregnancy, increase a child's risk for health problems: 60% of serious complications or deaths in newborns are related to preterm births. Greater-than-normal birth weights and longer gestation periods are common in Denmark's remote Faroe Islands, where people eat plenty of fish. A study appearing in a recent issue of the *British Medical Journal* evaluated a possible link between seafood intake and longer gestation periods.

Nearly 9,000 pregnant women in Denmark completed seafood-intake questionnaires at the 16th and 30th weeks of pregnancy. Seafood consumption included fish and shellfish, and was divided into four intake categories: never, 0-1 times monthly, 1-3 times monthly, or once or more per week.

Women who consumed no fish were three-and-a-half times more likely to have preterm delivery than women consuming fish at least weekly. Incidence of preterm delivery fell progressively from 7% in women eating no fish to 2% in women eating fish at least weekly.

Some of the potential dangers "preemies" face include underdeveloped lungs, bleeding in the brain, kidney problems, and vision and hearing impairment. You might not like fish, but while you're pregnant, you may want to make the sacrifice for your baby. If you refuse to eat seafood, take fish oil supplements, which also contain the omega-3 fatty acids found in fish and may also effectively ward off health problems. Avoid fish that might contain high mercury levels -- larger fish such as shark, mackerel, and swordfish -- which can potentially harm growing infants.

### *Reference:*

Olsen SF, Secher NJ. Low consumption of seafood in early pregnancy as a risk factor for preterm delivery: Prospective cohort study. *British Medical Journal* 2002;324, pp. 447-450.

For more information about staying healthy while pregnant, go to <http://www.chiroweb.com/find/archives/women/pregnancy/index.html>.

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