

# Pregnancy Warning Signs & Hazards

## Early Warning Signs

Symptoms for which you should contact your doctor immediately:

- Bleeding from the vagina
- Bad pains that do not quickly go away
- Chills and fever
- Vomiting that doesn't get better and if you are unable to hold down fluids
- Burning or any trouble passing urine

## Unsafe Substances

These things can damage your unborn baby. If you already smoke cigarettes or drink any alcohol, you will be given more information. It is best not to smoke or drink alcoholic beverages while you are pregnant.

Some new information suggests caffeine in coffee, tea, many colas and other soft drinks may be a cause of miscarriage (loss of babies early in pregnancy) or harm the growth of the baby. Try to avoid or limit caffeine-containing drinks while you are pregnant. Discuss the amount with your doctor.

Check with your doctor about the safety of any medication before taking it. If you are taking a medication necessary to maintaining your health, do not stop the medication without discussing this first with your doctor. Always discuss over-the-counter medications (such as pain relievers and antacids) with your doctor before taking them.

## Toxoplasmosis

Cats may carry a disease that is called toxoplasmosis. Even though it is rare for a mother to pass on toxoplasmosis to her fetus, it has been known to cause very serious problems in newborn babies including mental retardation, growth failure, blindness and deafness.

To prevent toxoplasmosis, avoid changing or cleaning the litter box as the disease is usually spread to humans by cat feces. Ask someone else to do this for you. Raw or poorly cooked meat (especially beef) is another cause of this disease. Cook all meat until it is well done and avoid eating raw beef in any form, including raw hamburger meat while you are pregnant. It is also important to wash your hands after handling raw meat. Other ways of preventing this problem are to wash fruits and vegetables before eating them and wearing gloves while gardening. Let your doctor know if you have eaten raw meat or handled cat feces (from cleaning the litter box). Your doctor will decide whether or not this is important.