

## Caffeine & Herbal Tea Intake during Pregnancy

Along with the joys of pregnancy, also come the risks for pregnant women and their babies. Caffeine and herbal tea is one of these areas pregnant women need to be cautious of. You may have been told to stop drinking coffee and tea while pregnant, yet you don't need to cut it out completely. There is a wide range of information that shows certain levels of caffeine and herbal tea during pregnancy causes no harm. Although you may not be able to drink the amount you could before you were pregnant, by limiting your intake you can still ensure a safe environment for your baby. Experts have stated that an amount of 150 mg – 300 mg of caffeine a day is the maximum you should consume. This amount is equal to three cups of tea or two mugs of coffee.



### Why do you need to stay away from caffeine while pregnant?

- Caffeine is a stimulant that increases your blood pressure and heart rate, both of which are not recommended during pregnancy. Also, caffeine can increase the amount you go to the bathroom, which can lead to dehydration.
- Caffeine can cross the placenta and affect your baby. Our metabolisms can often handle larger amounts of caffeine, however your baby's metabolism is still growing and it cannot fully breakdown caffeine. Large amounts of caffeine can lead to changes in your baby's sleep pattern, abnormal movement patterns, and even pre-term birth.

**Non-herbal teas** are great because they contain antioxidants. However, they also contain caffeine so you need to be careful about how much you drink. Non-herbal teas include Black tea (like Earl Grey and English Breakfast), Green tea, and Oolong tea.

**Herbal teas** do not contain caffeine. However, some herbs in tea are not safe to drink. Below is a list of herbs that are safe to drink and herbs in tea that should be avoided.

#### Safe Herbs

- Peppermint leaf (may help with nausea and vomiting), Lemon balm (calming, may help you sleep), Ginger Root (may help with nausea and vomiting), Rose hips, Citrus peel, Orange peel

#### Herbs you should avoid

- Catnip, Chamomile, Ephedra, Hibiscus, Lemongrass, Licorice root, Ginseng, Rosemary, Parsley, Sage, Nettle, Red Raspberry Leaf, St. John's Wort, Penny Royal, Senna



Caffeine can be found in coffee, tea, soda, energy drinks, and chocolate. It is important to consider all of these when counting caffeine amounts for the day.