

Harmful Chemicals in the Supermarket

Protect Your Baby When You're Pregnant



Take these easy, affordable steps to limit your contact with harmful chemicals. Even small changes can have big health benefits for you and your baby.



Buy fruits and vegetables to keep your unborn baby strong and healthy. **Always wash fresh fruits and vegetables** under running water before eating or cooking them — it helps lower the amount of **pesticides**.



Buy fish! It's good for you and your baby. Try for 2 to 3 servings each week of fish that are lower in **mercury**, like shrimp, light tuna, salmon, pollock, or catfish.

Skip fish that are higher in mercury, like shark, swordfish, king mackerel, and tilefish from the Gulf of Mexico.




Watch out for recycling codes 3 and 7 on plastic containers because those types of plastic have **BPA**.



Go for fresh or frozen foods instead of canned — cans may have **BPA**.



U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services
Agency for Toxic Substances
and Disease Registry

Harmful Chemicals to Avoid in the Supermarket

These chemicals can affect how your baby grows and develops.

BPA (bisphenol A) is a chemical that's in some plastic and metal food containers. Studies have found evidence that BPA may affect babies' brain development and their behavior as they grow older.

Mercury is a heavy metal that can get into water (like lakes and oceans) and builds up in some fish. When women are pregnant, eating fish with higher levels of mercury may harm their unborn babies. Mercury can cause problems with how babies develop.

Pesticides are chemicals used to kill mice, bugs, or weeds. Some people use pesticides in their homes, gardens, or yards. Fresh fruits and vegetables may also have pesticides on them. Studies show that some pesticides may affect how unborn babies and newborns develop.

For more information about how to protect yourself from harmful chemicals when you're pregnant, visit www.atsdr.cdc.gov/emes/public/exposures.html

They get into your body in 3 ways:



Swallowing them
(ingesting)



Breathing them in
(inhaling)



Touching them
(absorbing through
your skin)

Once the chemical is in your body,
it may affect your baby too.