

# Things that Cause Miscarriage – 7 Things That Can Harm Your Fetus

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A miscarriage is a traumatic experience that brings a tremendous feeling of loss, fear and uncertainty and in most cases, it is not something that expecting mothers would have had control over. In most miscarriages, it is simply difficult to pinpoint the cause because there is no obvious reason for it. However, new studies reveal that there are some things that cause miscarriage. Whether you have experienced miscarriage before or not, if you're trying to conceive, you should avoid the things that may affect your pregnancy. In this article, we discuss **7 things that cause miscarriage** that you should avoid:

1. [Coffee](#)
2. [Smoking](#)
3. [Heavy metals](#)
4. [Electromagnetic \(EM\) radiation](#)
5. [Alcohol](#)
6. [Drugs](#)
7. [Aspartame](#)

## Why Do Miscarriages Happen?

Miscarriages usually occur without warning and without any apparent cause. According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, early pregnancy loss occurs in 10% of all pregnancies<sup>[1]</sup>. And of all these miscarriages, 80% take place within the 1st trimester. While it is difficult to determine the exact cause of miscarriages in women, early miscarriage occur due to things beyond anyone's control, like the following:

- **chromosomal abnormalities** (in fact, this accounts for 50% of all early pregnancy losses)
- **advanced maternal age** (risk for miscarriage in women aged 45 and above is 80% versus 9 to 17% in women 20 to 30 years)
- **prior miscarriage**

## 7 Possible Things That Cause Miscarriage (And What You Can Do About Them)

Besides these risk factors above, new studies unearth a few more possible contributing factors to miscarriage. However, when it comes to these things that cause miscarriage, you can do something about them. Below are foods and habits you should avoid to increase your chances of becoming and staying pregnant.

1. Coffee

[Coffee](#) is one of the most commonly consumed things that cause miscarriage in some women. Research led by Dr. De-Kun Li of Kaiser Permanente in Oakland, California concluded the **regular intake of 200 mg of caffeine a day increases the risk of miscarriage**<sup>[2]</sup>. This level of caffeine is what you typically find in two cups of coffee.

### What you can do about it:

Miscarriages are most common in the first trimester of pregnancy, usually before the 20th week. Since this is the case, if you are pregnant or planning to get pregnant, it's recommended you stop drinking coffee at least three months before trying to conceive. If you really feel you need to have coffee, limit yourself to only one cup a day of water-decaffeinated organic coffee or even better, a coffee substitute from the health food shop. Women who drink more than 200 mg of caffeine a day have double the risk of miscarriage, with a 25% higher risk compared to a 12% risk of a miscarriage in women who didn't consume caffeine.

## 2. Smoking

One of the things that cause miscarriage is smoking. In another research study of almost 1,300 Japanese women<sup>[3]</sup> who had past pregnancies, those who smoked heavily during the first trimester of the pregnancy had **double the risk of having a miscarriage than the women who didn't smoke at all**. There are other reasons why you should quit smoking before attempting to get pregnant. While smoking is one of the most common things that cause miscarriage, it is also known to cause stillbirth, premature delivery and low birth weight in the baby.

### What you can do about it:

Trying to quit smoking is a difficult process for most individuals. But there are ways you can try to help you steer clear of nicotine, like the following:

- Gradually cut back on the number of cigarettes you smoke every day until you totally kick the habit
- Use alternative treatments like acupuncture or breathing and/or relaxation techniques
- Seek professional medical advice

## 3. Heavy Metals

Heavy metals are another one of the things that cause miscarriage. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) has already issued preventative warnings to pregnant or nursing women to avoid including seafood in their diet because of the possibility of heavy metal contamination<sup>[4]</sup>. Fish such as tuna and king mackerel and food such as sushi and sashimi have high levels of mercury. Mercury is known to cause neurological problems in the developing baby, as well as other developmental problems. Recent researches have shown mercury levels in the cord blood (umbilical cord linking mother to fetus) are two times higher than the levels found in the mother's bloodstream. In other words, the baby is twice more likely to have mercury-related problems than the mother. Also, researchers have concluded that heavy metals affect women's fertility. They seem to have a negative effect on ovarian and pituitary function.

### What you can do about it:

[Two heavy metals that mess with your fertility are mercury and lead.](#) In men, mercury affects sperm production, while in women, it can affect hormone regulation and ovulation. Lead, on the other hand, can cause infertility in both men and women, amongst many other things. Here are a few things that can help you minimize your risk of coming in contact with these heavy metals:

- Lower your intake of possible mercury-containing foods (tuna, shark, king mackerel, tilefish and swordfish)
- Keep the use of non-organic cosmetics at a minimum
- Since old paint contains lead, make sure to treat paint-deteriorated areas in your home
- Wash your hands as often as you can
- Eat healthy, chemical and pesticide-free, organic food

### 4. Electromagnetic (EM) Radiation

Ionizing EM radiation is the type of electromagnetic radiation you get from X-ray machines, radiation therapy machines and radioactive isotopes or radionuclides. You and your baby may be exposed to radiation during diagnostic procedures or radiation therapies. Examples of such procedures include X-rays and fluoroscopy. Generally, diagnostic procedures only emit 5 rad or 50mSv of radiation. This level of exposure doesn't cause reproductive risks such as miscarriages or fetal defects. Studies report that dangerous radiation levels are those above 20 rad or 200mSv. Also bear in mind that EM radiation emitted from computers, mobile phones and wireless networks at home can be another one of the things that cause miscarriage.

### What you can do about it:

Inform your medical practitioner first that you are pregnant or actively trying to get pregnant before being exposed to any form of electromagnetic radiation. Some of the simple things you can do to minimize electromagnetic radiation are the following:

- Limit your screen time
- Remove EM radiation-emitting gadgets in your room
- Stop using microwaves
- Do not use your laptop on your lap and don't keep your cellphones in your pocket

For more tips on how to avoid electromagnetic radiation, please see our article [EM Radiation and Fertility – 10 Steps to Protect Your Eggs and Sperm](#)

### 5. Alcohol

Regular alcohol consumption during pregnancy can cause miscarriages. Heavy drinking or binge drinking **can cause stillbirth as well as other developmental problems** in the fetus<sup>[5]</sup>. Also, your baby might acquire a disorder known as fetal alcohol syndrome.

### What you can do about it:

What should you drink during pregnancy? It's recommended you abstain from drinking alcohol during pregnancy and preconception care. In general, don't drink more than 1 glass of wine per week.

### 6. Drugs

Certain types of medication can be another one of the things that cause miscarriage. A study by Canadian researchers reports taking certain types of antidepressant drugs during pregnancy **may increase the likelihood of miscarriage by 68%**<sup>[6]</sup>. In the study of over 5,000 pregnant women, those taking antidepressants called selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) had a higher risk of miscarriage.

#### What you can do about it:

If you're already taking SSRIs and other prescription drugs for specific medical conditions, it is not recommended to discontinue them without consulting the prescribing physician. If you wish to discontinue these meds, speak to your doctor first and ask them for advice, whether for gradually reducing their use or for taking natural alternatives/using natural treatments in their place. For more information on prescription drugs and their possible effect on fertility, please see our blog: [9 Drugs Which May Affect Your Fertility](#)

### 7. Aspartame

Aspartame is an artificial sweetener usually found in products labeled 'diet', 'low sugar' or 'sugar-free'. When the surrounding's temperature exceeds 30 degrees Celsius, aspartame reacts and changes to formaldehyde (a compound used to preserve tissues). It may even turn to formic acid, a far more toxic compound than formaldehyde. Remember, your average body temperature is 37 degrees Celsius. Formaldehyde in the mother's bloodstream can cause her immune system to see the fetal tissue as a foreign substance and so attack it. Aspartame can be one of the things that cause miscarriage because it causes the woman's body to have an immune reaction against the fetus which can kill the fetus.

#### What you can do about it:

Does eating healthy prevent miscarriage? Yes, choosing healthier food options may help you decrease your risk for miscarriage. Here are some of the things that you can do to help eliminate aspartame in your diet:

- Give up processed foods gradually (and for good!), and not only the 'diet', 'low sugar' or 'sugar-free' variants
- Go organic - replace your processed drinks snacks with plenty of organic fruits and vegetables; make your own meals from scratch and using fresh, organic ingredients from your local market
- For more information on what you can eat, check out our article: [Fertility Diet – The Smart Way to Get Pregnant](#)

## How Can I Prevent a Miscarriage in the First Month? 7 Tips

While most miscarriages can't be prevented (since they are caused by things beyond your control, i.e. chromosomal disorders, problems with sperm or egg health), here are a few tips to help you decrease your

chances of miscarriage:

1. **Supplement with Zinc** (the fertility mineral)
2. **Boost progesterone levels**
3. **Increase your vitamin C intake**
4. **Make lifestyle changes** (avoid smoking and drinking alcohol)
5. **Give up coffee**
6. **Eat a diet rich in fruits, vegetables**, vitamins and minerals and good fats
7. **Get expert advice** - consult a naturopathic doctor for supplement recommendations and natural treatments that can help prepare your body for a healthy pregnancy

Things That Cause Miscarriage: Other Things to Keep in Mind

There are many other factors that can cause miscarriages. While preparing for pregnancy and once you are pregnant always ask yourself; 'would I give this substance/product/food to a newborn baby?' If the answer is 'no' then you yourself should not have it either. **Everything you consume** - eat, drink, put on your skin or inhale - will end up in your blood and circulation. From there it can cross over the placenta and enter your baby's circulation. **Your baby's organs are still underdeveloped** and can't handle most of the toxins which can harm their small organs and tissues. **If the damage is too great** the baby can't keep developing and this can lead to a miscarriage. **Avoiding the mentioned toxins** before you get pregnant can improve your egg and sperm quality before conception ensuring that you conceive with the healthiest eggs and sperm possible which contributes to your baby's health.

## It is Possible to Decrease Your Miscarriage Risk

Now that you know the things that cause miscarriage, it's time to take steps to avoid them to help your body prepare for a healthy pregnancy. If you wish to learn more about your risk factors for miscarriage and decreasing your risk for miscarriage, you can download our free report: [How to Lower the Chance of Miscarriage And Address The Causes of Miscarriages](#) What are your thoughts on toxins and miscarriages? Would you like to add to the topic? Would love to hear from you on the things that cause miscarriage.

### References

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[6]Nakhai-Pour, H. R., Broy, P., & Bérard, A. (2010). Use of antidepressants during pregnancy and the risk of spontaneous abortion. *Cmaj*, 182(10), 1031-1037. Retrieved from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2900326/>

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- [After Miscarriage: The Essential Guide to a Healthy Pregnancy](#)
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