

Anti-Inflammatory Foods in Late Pregnancy: What You Need to Know

A new study has come out cautioning women against eating anti-inflammatory foods in the last trimester of pregnancy, but is it for real or just another "rule"? Here's what you need to know.

Anti-Inflammatory Medicines and Their Risks

Doctors have long cautioned women against taking anti-inflammatory medicines during pregnancy, and the current recommendation is that nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs — like Advil or aspirin — should be avoided particularly in the last three months of pregnancy. The reasoning behind this is that taking these medications may increase the risk of the ductus arteriosus — the extra blood vessel a baby has before it's born — closing before it's supposed to, which is at the time of the first breath. The prostaglandins in the NSAIDs can make it harder for the baby's body to keep the vessel open.

Safety of Anti-Inflammatory Foods

So, the question then becomes if the compounds in anti-inflammatory medications may increase the risk of premature ductus arteriosus closure, wouldn't consuming anti-inflammatory foods and drinks also be problematic. The science is starting to indicate yes. [Researchers in Brazil](#) studied heart ultrasounds of babies in the third trimester and compared those whose moms did or did not consume a lot of anti-inflammatory foods. The researchers found for the babies with the mothers who were eating more anti-inflammatory foods, the blood was moving faster through the ductus vessel, indicating it may be narrower, and the right sides of the babies' hearts were larger than the left, possibly arising from blood backup from the tighter vessel. Some of the more [anti-inflammatory foods](#) include:

- Green tea
- Coffee
- Dark chocolate
- Grapes
- Citrus foods
- Cranberries

The results are still preliminary, and critics have already questioned whether even if the difference is real if it has any kind of clinical significance. In other words, does a smaller ductus actually cause problems?

Talking with Your Doctor

The research is ongoing and more follow up studies will be needed to validate the Brazilian results and look for other correlating factors, but should you be cutting back on anti-inflammatory foods now? Before you start removing foods from your diet, it's important to talk with your doctor. Anti-inflammatory foods can be very important to a well-rounded diet, and pregnant women should be especially careful about making substantial diet changes on their own.

If you're concerned about the risk or not sure if you're eating too many anti-inflammatory foods, your care provider can discuss your options and give suggestions. To prepare for this appointment, you may want to keep a food journal for a few weeks so that you can show your doctor exactly what you're

consuming and in what quantities. However, there's no reason to start panicking just yet. It seems like there is always some new rule — or change in the rules — on what pregnant women should or shouldn't eat. Following a sensible, well-rounded diet and sharing your concerns at your OBGYN appointments is the best approach.