

## Baby Pregnancy Old Wives Tales



Some people swear by them and some just laugh, but I guarantee that we have all been fooled at least once into believing that an old wives tale was true and actually tried whatever it told us to do. Most old wives tales have been proven false but many still follow their guidance. I have been drinking coffee since I was 6 years old and everyone always told me that coffee stunts your growth but you guessed it, that's a false old wives tale. While caffeine is not a healthy item to be putting into your child's regular diet, there is no compelling evidence anywhere that shows it will stunt your growth. Here are some very interesting but false old wives tales about pregnancy and parenting; perhaps you have tried one or two.

### Choosing and predicting the sex of your child:

- Some people believe that you can predict your baby's sex by mixing your urine with a little Drano. The resulting color is supposed to be the key, but no one seems to be able to agree on which color means which sex. One woman swears that this test has predicted the sex of her first three daughters, and says that now she is pregnant again and the result of the test is a bright blue color which is very different than the muddy brown color that her girls had. She says if she has a boy she will swear by the Drano test. Please don't try this. Not only is there nothing in Drano that would indicate a baby's gender, but mixing the chemicals in these two substances can produce dangerous fumes or even an explosion.
- If the fetal heart rate is under 140 beats per minute (BPM), it's a boy. Baby girl's heart rate is usually faster than a boy's, but only after the onset of labor. There's no difference between fetal heart rates for boys and girls, but the rate does vary with the age of the fetus. By approximately the fifth week of pregnancy, the fetal heart rate is near the mother's - around 80 to 85 BPM. It continues to accelerate until early in the ninth week, when it reaches 170 to 200 BPM and then decelerates to an average of 120 to 160 BPM by the middle of the pregnancy. Normal fetal heart rate during labor ranges from 120 to 160 BPM for boys and girls.
- Carrying low or forward means a boy; high or back means a girl. The way a pregnant woman carries the baby depends on her body type and the structure of the uterine muscles. In no way can the shape of a pregnant woman's abdomen foretell the sex of the baby. Neither can the fetal heart rate, the shape of the mother's face, or the old "Drano test." The only way to be 100% certain is to wait for the baby to be born.

### What you eat before conceiving can affect the sex of your child.

- **If you want a boy?**
  - Eat more meat (the redder the better).
  - Stick with salty snacks - pretzels, chips, and so on.
  - Dads-to-be: Stock up on soda (especially cola drinks).

- **If you want a girl**

- Both partners should eat lots of fish and veggies.
- Give in to your chocolate craving (or just eat sweets in general).

**Caring for babies and toddlers and general pregnancy tales:**

- Eating too much watermelon will make your child be born with a birth mark. Evidence supports that there is nothing that you can eat or drink that will create any unusual markings on your baby. Birth marks are caused by the blood vessels of the affected area being deficient in nerve supply. They have nothing to do with anything a pregnant woman eats.
- Don't breastfeed a toddler during pregnancy because the new baby needs all the nourishment it can get. If a woman is healthy, breastfeeding during pregnancy won't harm her, the fetus, or her toddler. (A doctor may recommend that a pregnant woman not breastfeed, though, if she has a nutritional deficiency, is underweight, or is at risk for pre-term labor.)

**Giving Birth:**

- It is better to cut than tear. This myth refers to the use of an episiotomy at the time of the birth. The term "tear" produces visual images in many women that they would not rather consider. Actually, if a woman tears during birth, most often they are small and do not extend into the muscle. In many cases, these tears do not even need any stitching (suturing) repairs done. However, when an episiotomy is cut, several layers of tissue and muscle are cut. Tears will often occur with an episiotomy as well. An episiotomy will usually need simple to complex suturing, depending on how deep the cut and how much of the woman's anatomy is involved. There is often more bleeding with an episiotomy since the cut often severs blood vessels. Tears also tend to heal much more comfortably than episiotomies. This may be because the skin has separated down anatomical lines and the tissue has not been crushed, as it is when a scissors is used.
- If you deny a pregnant woman the food she craves you will get a stye. Scientists can say with 100% certainty that, if you deprive a pregnant woman of a craving, your eyes will not suffer from a stye. The odds that the pregnant woman who wants her food will punch you in the eye are much greater than getting a bacterial infection.

Some old wives tales are fun to play around with, like trying to guess the sex of your child by suspending a wedding ring on a chain over your belly. If it swings back and forth, it's a girl. If it swings around in circles, it's a boy.

Others can be dangerous like believing that pregnant women should get lots of rest and not do any chores or exercise. Unless a woman is in a high risk pregnancy or suffering from specific complications, there is no need for bed rest. Exercise and physical activity can be good for the mother, and for the baby. Physical activity gets your heart and blood pumping, alleviates stress, helps you gain weight healthily, and keeps your body in shape, which can lead to a less difficult delivery. If you are physically active before pregnancy, discuss an exercise program with your doctor to

continue your good health. If you have never exercised before you became pregnant, discuss a light exercise routine (such as short walks) with your doctor to help you get in better shape. So have fun with the tales of old wives but also do your research before you eat anything weird or try a strange activity that might affect you or your baby's health.