For most families, when the good news of pregnancy gets out, both parents-to-be and other family members begin to prepare for the best and safest environment for the new addition. But did you know that during pregnancy both the fetus and the mother are even more susceptible to many food-borne illnesses? In fact, certain bacteria can cause an infection named listeriosis, which can be fatal to the unborn fetus.

Infected pregnant women may experience only mild, flu-like illness; however, their unborn children are at risk. Infection during pregnancy can lead to premature delivery, infection of the newborn, and even stillbirth. According to the CDC, approximately 2500 people become seriously ill and 500 people die each year from listeriosis (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2005).

If you’re pregnant, it’s important to follow special recommendations for food safety. For example, don’t eat hot dogs, luncheon meats, or deli meats unless they’re reheated until steaming hot. Also, avoid getting fluid from the meat packages on other foods, utensils, and food preparation surfaces, and your wash hands after handling these foods (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2005).

Soft cheeses such as feta, brie, and camembert are off-limits unless they have labels that clearly state they are made from pasteurized milk. Also, do not eat refrigerated pâtés, meat spreads, or smoked seafood. Canned or shelf-stable pâtés, meat spreads, and smoked seafood are okay (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2005).
A little diet modification can be just as important as a car seat when it comes to the safety of a new baby.

Listening, learning, and living together: it's the science of life. “Family Album” is a co-production of University of Florida IFAS Extension, the Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, and of WUFT-FM. If you'd like to learn more, please visit our website at http://www.familyalbumradio.org.

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References

