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## Pregnant? Craving a hamburger? Here's another reason why you need to resist

Nicole Madigan



A new study linking a mother's diet during pregnancy to her child's mental health means there's more reason than ever for pregnant women to eat a healthy diet. What were your pregnancy junk food cravings?



There's no shortage of information promoting the benefits of a healthy diet during pregnancy. And while most of us are well aware that eating nutritious foods during those nine long months will improve our health and wellbeing as well as help manage weight gain, it can be difficult not to give in to those cravings.

Well, now there's a new reason to maintain a healthy diet during pregnancy, and it's all to do with the future mental health of our unborn bub.

A new study from Deakin University has revealed an unhealthy diet can have a significant effect on our future children. According to the study, unhealthy eating during pregnancy can increase the risk of depression, ADHD, anxiety and behavioural problems in children by the age of five.

In other words, the nutrients a baby receives in the womb as well as in the first year of its life directly affects its mental health outcomes.



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## How to beat unhealthy pregnancy cravings

But before you start pulling out your hair as you struggle to define – and maintain – a healthy diet, [Changing Habits](#) nutritionist Cyndi O'Meara says it takes just a little effort and some common sense to keep the cravings at bay. She offers these tips:

- **Have a high protein breakfast:** High levels of protein are more likely to relax the area of the brain that is responsible for food cravings and high calorie foods.
- **Give in to chocolate cravings:** The good news is chocolate can be good for you. It can alleviate stress and in some cases treat depression. Unfortunately, most commercial chocolates have been tainted by additives and preservatives that remove the integrity from the source. Paired with non-refined sugar, products like cacao wafers allow you to enjoy chocolate recipes without affecting your child.
- **Don't go hungry:** By keeping your body fed during the day with real and healthy foods, you are never hungry and therefore less likely to have unhealthy cravings. Unhealthy cravings develop when the body is deprived from food – so eat up!



- **Boost your immunity:** Cut out processed foods, and anything that's not giving your body the goodness it needs. By purchasing foods in their whole state, you'll boost your immune system and improve your own health as well as that of your baby.

Breastfeeding is best for babies and provides many benefits. Combined breast and bottle feeding in the first weeks of life may reduce the supply of your own breast milk. Always consult your doctor, midwife or health care professional for advice about feeding your baby. This post is part of the Early Life Nutrition story.

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