

Diet Linked to Preeclampsia Risk in Pregnant Latinas

Certain foods may increase or reduce risk of high blood pressure during pregnancy.

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A new study suggests that certain [combination of foods](#) consumed during [pregnancy](#) may influence likelihood of developing [preeclampsia](#), a serious and sometimes fatal late-pregnancy complication that raises [blood pressure](#) and can damage the liver and kidneys.

The study, published in the [Journal of the American Heart Association](#) and led by the Keck School of Medicine at University of Southern California, focused on low-income Latinas in Los Angeles.

Results suggest that different combinations of foods consumed during pregnancy may increase or reduce the likelihood of developing preeclampsia. Additionally, interventions in diet during pregnancy may reduce the risk of the condition, according to a [Keck School of Medicine news release](#).

Cardiovascular disease is the most common cause of death in new moms, and about [1 in every 16 Latina women](#) 20 years and older have coronary heart disease, the most common type of heart disease, according to a study published in the [American Heart Association journal Circulation](#).

What's more, [Latina women are at higher risk](#) of developing [blood pressure disorders during pregnancy](#), including gestational hypertension ([high blood pressure](#) developed for the first time after the 20th week of pregnancy) and preeclampsia.

For the study, subjects completed two questionnaires about the types of food and beverages consumed during their third trimester of pregnancy.

Of the 451 Latina women involved in the study, 12% developed preeclampsia, which is twice the national average, according to study lead author Luis Maldonado, PhD, MPH, a postdoctoral scholar and research associate in the department of population and public health sciences at the Keck School of Medicine.

Results showed that women who adhered to a diet high in solid fats, refined grains and cheese were about four times more likely to develop preeclampsia compared with women who adhered the least to this diet.

Women who consumed diets that consisted primarily of vegetables, oils and fruits were least likely to develop preeclampsia during pregnancy.

For women who were overweight prior to pregnancy, which is a known risk factor for developing preeclampsia, the positive effect of eating a diet consisting of vegetables, oils and fruits was heightened, according to researchers.

“The combination of foods in the overall diet during pregnancy appear to be related to preeclampsia and this research gives important insight into which food combinations may confer protection or detriment,” Maldonado said. “Diet is a modifiable lifestyle factor which provides a potential intervention point during pregnancy. Our findings suggest low-income Hispanic women at greater risk for preeclampsia may benefit from dietary guidance during prenatal visits to improve intakes of certain combination of foods such as vegetables, oils, and fruit.”

To read more, click [#Pregnancy](#) or [#High Blood Pressure](#). There, you’ll find headlines such as “[Obesity During Pregnancy Raises Risk of Fatty Liver Disease in Kids](#),” “[Prioritizing Heart Health in Expecting Latina Mothers](#)” and “[Diet May Impact Pregnancy Complications Among Latinas](#).”