

Falling off the Paleo wagon

Written by Administrator
Friday, 19 July 2013 19:10

Why Falling Off the Paleo Wagon in Pregnancy May Be Good for You

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You are a CrossFitter. You work hard, you train hard and you eat clean. Your nutrition is as important to you as your workouts. You look great, you feel great and you can rock any WOD.

Then one day, you get some news. It may be thrilling, terrifying or just plain unexpected. You are going to bring a bundle of joy into the world.

Awesome!

You can do this. It's just an endurance WOD. You will continue to work out and eat well and life will continue as normal. Except, you wake up one morning and BAM! The thought of eating those eggs for breakfast sends you running to the toilet, which may just become your closest friend for the next couple of months. The same thing happens when you look at a piece of chicken or steak. You haven't had bread in years, but somehow you have managed to eat two bagels, four pieces of toast and three bowls of cereal, and it's only Wednesday!

What the heck is going on?



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You, my friend, are the victim of maternal hormones. And no, this isn't just some weird pregnancy thing. It's biology. And some scientists think it's embryo protection (1,3,4).

Critical fetal development occurs in the first trimester, and the mother's immune system is suppressed in order to allow that development (1). So, why all the vomiting, you ask?

With your immune system essentially compromised as a means of preventing rejection of the child developing in the uterus (3), vomiting and nausea is your body's way of training you to avoid foods that tend to contain toxins, chemicals and pathogens (1,4). Things that can harm you, and interfere with your baby's development.

For women who experience morning sickness, symptoms peak between the 6th and 18th week of pregnancy, when embryonic organ development is most vulnerable to chemical disruption (1). Aversion to and avoidance of certain foods also peaks during the first trimester for many pregnant women (3) and tapers off thereafter. The blandness of the bread and crackers you've been eating calm the nausea and allow you to keep your fruit and veggies down.

A lot of you write to me freaked out about the way you have been eating, which is not paleo. But it is normal, and it is rooted in your biology. Your body is protecting you and your baby. And it is temporary. You can stop panicking now.

For most women, things settle down and start to return to normal in the second trimester. If your nausea and vomiting keep you from eating or drinking anything at all, speak to your doctor about available treatments that are safe for you and your baby so you don't become malnourished or dehydrated (2). Also, taking the vitamins your doctor has recommended or prescribed will ensure that you get what you need, even when vomiting or not eating. Try to take them when you are able to keep something in your stomach.

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Ginger and peppermint seem to work well for a lot of women to help ease the nausea, but if all else fails, saltines seem to do the trick. Some women will experience morning sickness (which can hit in the evening or last all day) throughout the entire pregnancy, and others will not have it at all. Do the best you can to stay away from triggers that make you feel ill (2).

We all imagine we will do exactly as we wish during our pregnancies, but the reality is that this baby will cause changes in your behavior that will extend far beyond the pregnancy. But that is an article for another day.

During the first 12-18 weeks, eat what you can, work out when you can, rest when you can, and know that this too shall pass. You will be back on the paleo wagon in no time.

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