

Skinny Bitch: Bun in the Oven

*A Gutsy Guide to Becoming
One Hot and Healthy Mother!*

By Rory Freedman and Kim Barnouin



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For mothers (especially single mothers), who are the unsung heroes of the world

And for our own mothers, with the deepest love and gratitude.

Foreword

AS AN OB/GYN WITH A FULL OBSTETRICAL PRACTICE, I see many women with concerns about their diet during pregnancy. If you are looking to make small changes in your diet, this is a helpful, educational guide for making healthier choices. If you are looking to make more radical changes but not sure how or where to start, the varied and delicious menu plan can really help you jumpstart the process. Rory and Kim manage to be straightforward, entertaining, and very thought-provoking all at the same time.

Whether you are looking for a few tips or an overhaul in your eating plan, this book is an incredibly useful guide. Pregnancy is a special and unique time, and can be the perfect motivation for doing something to improve your health and how you feel. The best thing you can do for your baby is to take care of yourself, and it is never too late to do something about your own health and well-being.

Jessica Lynn Schneider, MD, FACOG
Obstetrics and Gynecology

AS A PEDIATRICIAN, I CAN HAPPILY SAY THAT *Skinny Bitch: Bun in the Oven* outlines a safe and healthy diet for pregnant women and their babies. Rory and Kim's brash language is down-to-earth and makes for an entertaining read. Their anecdotes and thorough research will force you to ask questions and examine your daily life.

In my practice, families commonly ask me about lifestyle choices. In pediatrics, parents are accustomed to hearing many different ways to do the same thing. For example, if you asked twenty people how to introduce solid foods to their infant, or train them to sleep through the night, or how to treat the common cold, you would likely receive twenty different responses. As a result, I teach "common sense pediatrics" or "common sense parenting." We may not always agree on what to do for our children, but we should agree that there is more than one right way. *Skinny Bitch: Bun in the Oven* presents one of these "right" ways—the advantages of a vegan lifestyle during pregnancy and beyond.

Scott W. Cohen, MD, FAAP
Pediatrics

Introduction

Congratulations. You're knocked up. Chances are, you've dreamt of being pregnant since you were a little girl. So take a moment to acknowledge that you are living a dream and be thankful. Okay, that's not enough. You've got work to do. Being a good mother starts now. Unless you were raised by crackheads, you know that your diet is the most important factor in determining your baby's health. Indeed, it's an awesome responsibility, but don't let it overwhelm you. It's not rocket science. While there are a few specific things pregnant women do need to adhere to, overall, you just need to be healthy. Healthy mommy=healthy baby. So feel doubly blessed because your pregnancy will force you to finally prioritize your own well-being. Get psyched: you are about to embark on the most exciting journey of your lifetime—motherhood and optimal health!

BITCHCLAIMER

We didn't write this book to make friends. We wrote this book to help women eat right—ensuring successful pregnancies and healthy babies. So if you want to hear “everything in moderation,” “an occasional glass of wine is fine,” or any other candy-coated bullshit, pick another book. We will tell you the truth about food and how what you eat affects your pregnancy and baby.

Go make friends at your Lamaze classes. We're invested in making a difference in your life.

P.S. This isn't *What to Expect When You're Expecting*. We don't provide a blow-by-blow of what's happening each month, and we don't give you the lowdown on the best burp cloths. It's a how-to-eat guide, with a few extras here and there.

P.P.S. A healthy pregnancy diet isn't drastically different than a healthy regular diet. So if you read our first book, *Skinny Bitch*, don't be surprised (or pissed) to find much of the same information here.

P.P.P.S. We're not gynos, so be sure to talk to your doctor about any of our recommendations.



Chapter One

You're Knocked Up, Now Give It Up

Use your head. If you want a healthy baby, you have to be healthy. Which means you have to give up your gross vices. Not only is smoking N-A-S-T-Y, but it can cause premature birth, attention deficit disorder (ADD) during childhood, asthma, respiratory disease, and low birth weight. All the toxic components from smoking go directly into your baby's bloodstream, weakening the immune system. This also constricts the veins and arteries, which decreases the flow of oxygen, blood, and nutrients to your baby. Women who smoke are at least twenty times more likely to miscarry than nonsmokers. Give it up. And steer clear of secondhand smoke, too.

Ditto for drinking. Just two drinks a day can significantly increase your risk of miscarriage. Alcohol enters the fetal bloodstream in the same concentration it enters yours. But it takes the baby twice as long to eliminate the alcohol from his system. Drinking while pregnant can cause low birth weight, premature labor, mental deficiencies, physical deformities, and even neonatal death.³ Alcohol can cause pre- and postnatal growth deficiencies, congenital heart defects, brain anomalies, and atypical facial appearance.⁴ Abnormalities can be seen in approximately one-third of infants born to heavy drinkers. And heavy drinking doesn't mean a bottle of Jack Daniels. It means only an average of one ounce or more of alcohol per day.⁵ If you are craving wine, beer, or booze while pregnant, you're in trouble. To get help quitting drinking, call the Alcoholics Anonymous World Headquarters at 212-870-3400 to find an AA meeting near you or visit www.alcoholics-anonymous.org. (Don't be afraid. It'll make you a better mom and a happier person.) If you hit the bottle before you knew you were pregnant, don't beat yourself up. Just make healthy choices from here on out.

And stop injecting coffee into your veins! Caffeine is a diuretic (it makes you pee more), and it drains fluid and calcium from the body,⁶ both of which are vital to mom and baby. It can also interfere

with your body's ability to absorb iron, which is also detrimental.⁷ Now, we know nothing incites rage like suggesting someone kick his or her coffee habit. Time and time again, we see how resistant people are to giving it up.

Make no mistake: coffee is a highly addictive drug for many people. And like all drugs, it comes with an ugly slew of side effects. Caffeine (whether found in coffee, tea, or soda) can cause headaches, digestive problems, irritation of the stomach and bladder, peptic ulcers, diarrhea, constipation, fatigue, anxiety, and depression. It affects every organ system, from the nervous system to the skin. Caffeine raises stress hormone levels, inhibits important enzyme systems that are responsible for cleaning the body, and sensitizes nerve reception sites.⁸ It basically puts the body into a "fight or flight" mode every time you drink it, so imagine how it can affect your unborn baby: decreased birth weight, smaller head size, jitters, metabolic problems, and even mental retardation.⁹ Add its potential to worsen mood swings and affect your sleep,¹⁰ and it becomes really difficult to see the point. Not convinced? Even moderate consumption can affect fetal heart rate and movement patterns.¹¹ In infants, caffeine can cause rapid respiration, tremors, and the development of diabetes later in life. In countries with the highest rates of diabetes, the caffeine consumption is highest, too. It's suspected that the buildup of caffeine in the fetal pancreas can cause damage to insulin-producing cells.¹² Happy Birthday, junior! I got you some diabetes! Here's our last-ditch effort: If drinking more than two cups of coffee a day increases the likelihood of miscarriage,¹³ why would you mess with one? IT'S JUST NOT WORTH IT. GET OVER YOUR ADDICTION. It'll be a tough week or two, and then you'll be free for life.

We are sympathetic if you're already hooked. Just do your best to immediately start weaning yourself off. Start by blending your regular coffee with decaf. If you make coffee at home, mix together three-quarters regular and one-quarter decaf coffee beans. If you get your java at a coffee shop, ask them to mix it for you. In three days, do half regular, half decaf. In another three days, do one-quarter regular and three-quarters decaf. Three days later, say goodbye to your regular and go full throttle on the decaf. But just for five days. Each day, try to leave a little bit more left in your cup so that by the end of the week, you can walk away from your decaf, too. You don't want to replace your regular coffee addiction with a decaf addiction.

Coffee beans, like other crops, are grown with chemical pesticides. And decaffeinating them doesn't get rid of the pesticides. In fact, sometimes, the decaffeination process can actually incorporate more chemicals! One compound, methylene chloride, is also used as an industrial solvent and paint stripper, and chronic exposure may cause birth defects.¹⁴

A better way to start the day is with a hot cup of lemon water. It's great for getting started on your water intake for the day, and there's the bonus of a little vitamin C from the fresh lemon juice. Consider having a glass of juice, for crying out loud. That's the kind of morning buzz that won't come with any negative side effects.

Speaking of negative side effects: When your newborn arrives, will you put soda into a baby bottle and feed it to her? So why would you feed it to her in utero? Soda is garbage for both of your bodies, so just say "no" to this liquid Lucifer. Pregnant women need an additional 200 to 300 calories a day during their second and third trimesters but these need to come from wholesome foods with nutritional value. Soda offers no value whatsoever. You might as well stick your head in the toilet bowl and drink from there. (Don't even get us started on caffeine-infused "energy" drinks. Those are the friggin' antiChrist.) Soda is loaded with caffeine and has the equivalent of ten teaspoons of sugar!¹⁵

addition, it can cause excessive abdominal fat, high blood pressure, reduction of good cholesterol, and increased risk of obesity, and can lead to heart disease and diabetes. By the way, this is regular *and* diet soda we're talking about here!¹⁶ So don't go patting yourself on the back if you drink diet soda. That stuff is even worse. It's not good for you (pregnant or not), and it's sure as hell not good for your baby. Artificial sweeteners like aspartame (Equal or NutraSweet) contain aspartic acid, phenylalanine, and methanol, all of which may cause abnormalities in the brains of developing fetuses.¹⁷

You've heard about the "eight glasses of water a day" thing, right? Well now that you're knocked up, it's ten. And if you're filling up on 16 ounces of liquid Lucifer at a time, chances are you're not getting your 80 ounces of water a day. Water is vital for detoxifying your body; it literally flushes out all the stored toxins. In addition, drinking a sufficient amount of water will prevent constipation. And preventing constipation will prevent the all-too-common pregnancy hemorrhoids. Water also transports nutrients from the food you eat to the baby. Aim for ten glasses a day—more if you're active. In the last trimester, especially, dehydration can lead to premature contractions and labor.¹⁸ So drink up.

But stay away from the medicine cabinet! Maternal drug exposure has been said to cause at least ten percent of all birth defects.¹⁹ Clinical trials for medicine are rarely performed on pregnant women. So we rely on trial and error, instead.²⁰ Some over-the-counter meds that seem to have had no ill side effects on fetuses are deemed "safe" for pregnant women. But perhaps if we took a closer look, we would find alarming "coincidences." We just can't know for sure. What we do know is that in the first trimester, your baby's organs are developing. And medicine taken during this time can have a serious adverse effect on fetal development and cause birth defects and deformities. A severe enough birth defect can trigger miscarriage.²¹ While the second trimester is considered "safest" for medication, low birth weight and interference with nervous system development can result.²² Third trimester medication can trigger uterine contractions, causing early, delayed, or even prolonged labor. It can also limit baby's blood supply and cause complications after birth, like difficulty breathing. It is generally agreed upon that pregnant women should avoid aspirin, ibuprofen, and naproxen. Allergies can be made with aspirin, and many pain medicines contain aspirin, ibuprofen, or caffeine. So beware.²³ Some cough syrups and sleep aids contain alcohol. And even though heartburn is a common complaint, you're asking for trouble with antacids. Some contain sodium bicarbonate, which can cause constipation and gas and magnify water retention problems. Others have aluminum, which may also clog your butt and affect the way your body metabolizes other minerals. Excessive use of magnesium-based antacids can lead to magnesium poisoning.²⁴ Yes, experts have proclaimed Tylenol safe for pregnant women.²⁵ But use your own head. Do you think putting *chemicals* in your body is good for your unborn, developing fetus?

Usually, when we don't feel well, it is our body alerting us to the fact that something is wrong. And taking medicine doesn't necessarily cure the problem; it only masks the symptoms. So popping pills isn't the answer. Now, we know for some, the whole pregnancy experience can be taxing on the body. And at times, you may be uncomfortable or downright miserable. But do your best to suck it up. Think of it this way: Every ache and pain you endure without medicine prepares you for the ecstasy of squeezing an infant out of your V-spot. (Obviously, if you are on prescribed medication, you need to consult a physician before discontinuing it.)

We aren't trying to scare you with all this gloom and doom. We just want to give it to you straight. And if you can't take a little rough talk from two Skinny Bitches, then you aren't prepared to be

mother. 'Cause let's face it: kids can be little shits. So toughen up.



Chapter Two

Yes, It's Normal

Of course, you want this to be the best time of your whole life. But you've got these little nagging worries in the back of your mind keeping you from fully enjoying it. Obviously, it is important to see your doctor or midwife for anything that's troubling you. But let us put your mind at ease a little.

Your back hurts, huh? Bummer. But what you'd expect? You're carrying around extra weight. This shifts your center of gravity, which changes your posture. Also, your ligaments stretch and soften and your joints loosen to prepare you for labor.²⁶ Some women have backaches *and* sciatica, a sharp pain that can shoot all the way down to your heel. It totally sucks, but it's somewhat common—the uterus can press on the sciatic nerve. Back pain that's severe and unrelenting, low and dull, or accompanied by other symptoms should be brought to your doctor's attention.²⁷ But the other stuff just comes with the territory.

So does shortness of breath. Your uterus is expanding—shifting your organs, pressing on your diaphragm, and leaving your lungs with less room to expand. Also, you breathe more often, which can feel like shortness of breath.²⁸ Babies can really cramp your style, huh?

No, you don't have Chronic Fatigue Syndrome; it's normal to be tired throughout your pregnancy. Your hormone levels change rapidly in the first trimester, and there is an increase of progesterone, which can make you sleepy. Also, your body produces extra blood to help transport oxygen and nutrients to the fetus. This means more work for your heart and a greater demand on your entire circulatory system.²⁹ By the third trimester, your uterus is enlarged and you're carrying a baby inside it. Of course you're tired. Geesh.

But not too tired for sex, eh? Not only are your hormones raging (especially progesterone and

estrogen) but you've also got increased blood flow to your boobs and your you-know-what. This can definitely lead to a higher sex drive. Plus, the fact that you aren't obsessing about getting pregnant anymore puts the fun back in sex. And you actually love your husband again, instead of just viewing him as a sperm donor. But if you want to kill him, that's normal, too. Many women are so sick during their first trimester—some throughout their entire pregnancies—that they have no libido at all. And let's face it: Lots of wives hate having sex anyway. (Note to husband: If you happen to read this, we didn't mean your wife. She loves sex.)

And he loves you, even though you're packing on the pounds. You're pregnant, and it's normal to gain weight. Now is not the time to be neurotic about your appearance or be obsessed with your favorite jeans. We only titled the book *Skinny Bitch: Bun in the Oven* to get your attention. Seriously. It was a sneaky marketing ploy. But the last thing a pregnant woman should be doing is worrying about her figure. Provided you aren't pigging out with reckless abandon, your weight gain will be justifiable and totally temporary.

Unless you're constipated and having trouble “dropping the kids off at the pool.” One of the important functions of pooping is weight maintenance. And unfortunately, constipation is a common side effect of pregnancy. All the hormonal changes—especially the increase in progesterone—affect the digestive process. Your colon is absorbing more water than usual, which can make your poops a little dryer and harder to come by. Gentle exercise can whip your ass and bowels into shape. The increase in oxygen can increase your intestinal action. And some workouts, like tai chi and yoga, can stimulate internal activity.³⁰ Good for your butt, good for your baby. But if you're still plagued by a brown blockade, you're probably not eating as well as you could. Avoid products that are highly processed and contain white flour, like most cookies, cakes, donuts, pastas, breads, and bagels. (If you're craving one, just ask yourself, “Am I willing to get hemorrhoids for *this*?”) Also, up your fluid intake with water, juices, homemade soups, and fruit smoothies. And consider your anal issues as an extra incentive to eat healthy, fibrous foods like fruits, vegetables, leafy greens, legumes, nuts, seeds, oatmeal, brown rice, and wholegrain breads and muffins.

Granted, you may be farting like a caveman and wary of adding fibrous fuel to the fire. But gas and pregnancy go hand in hand, so get over it. Avoid fried foods and other junk, for starters. And try to eat multiple small meals, instead of three jumbo ones. Really chew your food and eat slowly. You can also experiment with food combining. For example, try eating starchier foods (potatoes, brown rice, whole grains) with less starchy foods (leafy greens, broccoli, string beans). If your gas is actually *painful* (not just embarrassing or inconvenient), you can eliminate or reduce your intake of onion, garlic, legumes, and cabbage.³¹ But these foods are healthy and shouldn't be avoided just to prevent a few toots. Sure it can be embarrassing, but personally, we think farting is almost as much fun as eating. Consider yourself lucky.

Unless you have heartburn, which totally sucks. Sorry. But it's very common, due again to those dastardly hormones, especially estrogen and progesterone. And the fact that your expanded uterus can shove your stomach out of its normal position doesn't help, either. Eating smaller, more frequent meals should help somewhat. So should drinking between meals, instead of during them. Try not to go to bed or lie down after overloading with food. And, as previously mentioned, abstain from coffee, alcohol, wine, beer, and fried foods. It's also a good idea to steer clear of spicy foods, carbonated drinks, rich pastries, and more than a tad bit of chocolate. Especially since excessive weight gain can cause heartburn. Since misery loves company, take comfort in knowing that as many as 80 percent of pregnant women are in heartburn hell, too.³² Some women have it all the way through, but generally

sucks in the fifth month and blows in the final three. If you are immobilized by it, consult with a herbalist or naturopath for herbal remedies. But first try some chamomile tea.

But don't expect to find a quick fix for your mood swings. There are thirty different hormones present in your body during pregnancy! And in the last trimester, your prolactin level increases to stimulate milk production. So the third trimester can be extra hairy. Just resign yourself to feeling crazy, weepy, or ready to kill someone for nine months. That way, you'll be prepared for the worst but pleasantly surprised if you keep it together.

We cannot emphasize enough the importance of a healthy, well-balanced diet for warding off mood swings. For starters, be sure to get an adequate amount of vitamins through your diet. Popping a pill once a day isn't nearly as effectual as what you're eating throughout the day. Literally, a single meal can affect your mood and make or break your whole day. Foods rich in B vitamins jack up your levels of dopamine and serotonin, your "feel good" neurotransmitters. So load up on apricots, avocados, bananas, dates, figs, lentils, lima beans, soybeans, peanuts, pumpkin seeds, almonds (raw), sesame seeds, walnuts, green leafy vegetables, brewer's yeast, tofu, spirulina, and whole grains (like brown rice, buckwheat, oats, millet, quinoa, and wheat germ). (We realize that some of these foods may seem unappetizing if you're not used to them, but they'll grow on you.) These foods are also rich in carbohydrates, which can completely affect your state of mind.

Ever wonder why you crave sugar (carbs) or comfort food (carbs) when you're depressed? It's like this: eating carbs causes a release of insulin, which, in turn, creates a temporary reduction of all your amino acid levels except tryptophan. Without competition from the other aminos, your tryptophan levels increase. And tryptophan gets converted into serotonin, a "feel good" neurotransmitter. So eating carbs is your body's way of self-medicating. Which is totally fine, provided you're eating healthy complex carbs and not refined sugar, white flour, white bread, white rice, regular pasta, or other highly processed foods. These simple carbs spike your "feel good" levels and then send them crashing down, which can make you feel moody, irritable, tired, depressed, absent-minded, lethargic, or insane.

High protein diets can have similar negative effects by reducing levels of serotonin and tryptophan.³³ So pay attention to your carb intake. Even with the good carbs, notice how you feel immediately after or a short while later. If they make you feel sleepy or mopey, eat your day's largest portion at dinnertime, instead of in the middle of the day. That way, you can take your cranky ass to bed instead of walking around miserable all day. But don't avoid carbs altogether. They are super important for you and your baby, and you should have complex carb rations with every meal.

Again, eating several small meals throughout the day, as opposed to three big ones, is a helpful tool. And again, caffeine and sugar should be avoided. These two punks can totally sabotage your mood and cause depression and fatigue. Another weapon in your arsenal against mood swings: exercise. When we exercise, our brains release endorphins and other "feel good" opiates. So if you're battling your emotions, get active and see if it helps. (Yoga is great for physical exercise and emotional release.)

All the while, never underestimate the power of friendship. Talk out your problems. Confess your fears. Share your demons. Often, a dose of good friends can ease the biggest burdens. If that doesn't work, try a dose of peppermint, spearmint, or raspberry tea (caffeine-free, of course).

If you're avoiding bad foods, eating healthy ones, exercising regularly, having regular powwows, but still feeling depressed—Get help. There is no shame in saying, "This isn't right. I'm taking

excellent care of myself and doing all the right things, but I still feel crummy. I need help.” Keep your doctor apprised of the situation, but try a naturopath and/or herbalist. If that doesn’t do the trick, visit your doctor and investigate your options. While we fully promote natural remedies and believe that most problems can be treated holistically, we know that in some instances, traditional medical treatments are needed.

It’s not bad enough you’re losing all your marbles, but now you’ve gotta lose your lunch, too. Morning sickness can be a real bitch. And not just in the morning, either. It’s estimated that 50-80 percent of all pregnant women suffer from this puke-fest, especially during the first trimester. But reassured, it usually ends around twelve to sixteen weeks. There are many theories regarding the cause of morning sickness: One hypothesis is that your body is adjusting to all the hormonal changes. Another suggests an increased sensitivity to odors. Or it could be that while progesterone relaxes the muscles in the uterus to prevent early labor, it also relaxes the stomach and intestines, causing excess stomach acids. Some claim morning sickness is an evolutionary adaptation that keeps pregnant women away from foods that may harm their developing fetuses. (Interesting concept, since the foods that most commonly repulse women in the first trimester are the most likely to carry harmful parasites: meat, poultry, eggs, and fish.) Stress, a vitamin B-6 deficiency, low blood sugar levels, and chemical by-products of the increased hormones have also been blamed. Maybe. Maybe. Maybe. Or maybe it’s due to HCG (human chorionic gonadotrophin), the increased hormone that shows up on positive pregnancy tests.³⁴

Whatever the reason for morning sickness, it sucks. But there are as many suggested remedies as there are theories. And while we hate to sound like a broken record, eating smaller, frequent meals might help. As can eating complex carbs while avoiding caffeine; sugar; and spicy, fried, and rich foods. Many women swear by crackers, which we’re happy to endorse, so long as they’re made from whole grains and not white or bleached flour. (Also make sure they don’t contain sugar, corn syrup, or hydrogenated oils.) Some women tout vitamin B-6 and up their intake by eating bananas, brown rice, corn, nuts, whole grains, avocados, and potatoes, or they take supplements. Others drink chamomile, raspberry, fennel seed, ginger, peppermint, spearmint, or anise tea (all caffeine-free). A cup of tea may do the trick, but don’t overdose on it, because it can cause uterine stimulation. You’re just going to have to experiment until you find something that works for you. Just do your best to replenish your fluids throughout the day, as constant puking will dehydrate you.

And don’t shit your drawers if you notice a little blood in them. A week to ten days after conception, implantation bleeding can occur when the fertilized egg attaches to the uterine wall. And it’s estimated that one in five women experience spotting during their first trimester. Some even have light bleeding for the first six months, occurring when their menstrual cycle would’ve taken place. Weird, huh? Certainly, it’s alarming to see blood in your undies when you’re pregnant. And in some cases, it could be a problem. But it’s also very common. So do not panic and immediately go to your dark place of “Something’s wrong. I’m having a miscarriage. It’s because I was a slut in college.” Try to remain calm (and optimistic) and call your doctor or midwife.

She’ll also be able to allay your fears about that itching down south. No, your baby didn’t give you crabs. (Although you should check with your gyno to make sure you didn’t get an STD during your slutty college days.) Yeast infections are common during pregnancy and can result from either the high level of pregnancy hormones or a pH imbalance.³⁶ Regardless of the cause, you’ll likely be converted into a crotch-scratching lunatic. Embarrassing, but normal.

Oh yeah, so is that sludge in your underwear. It’s just a cocktail of normal bacterial flora and o

cells shed from the walls of your VJ. It's the same snail trail that was in your pants before you got pregnant, there's just more of it now due to the increase in hormones and greater blood flow to your cookie.³⁷

And lots of grown women piss their pants. Nothing to be ashamed of. Again, all your organs are getting moved around and pressed on. The pressure on your bladder can cause a little leakage throughout the day. Ha ha.

It's also likely that you'll have to pee more. Your body has about 30-50 percent more blood than you did before. This means your kidneys are working harder to filter the increase in blood, which means more sissy.³⁸

Which normally wouldn't be so bad, but your legs and ankles are the size of tree trunks. That swelling is perfectly normal. It's caused by the increase of all the extra fluids in your body. (A sudden swelling of your hands and face, however, is *not* normal! That could signify preeclampsia—call your doctor ASAP!)³⁹

So your back's killing you, you've got heartburn *and* cankles, your bladder's leaking, and your cooch is itching like crazy. All you want is a good night's sleep after another full day of torture. Only you can't get @%#* comfortable, because you've got gas, shortness of breath, and you have to get up every two minutes to pee. As your pregnancy progresses, it also becomes harder to find a comfortable position to sleep. Mother Nature isn't cruel. She's just preparing you for the sleepless nights to come.

Ah, the joys of motherhood.



Chapter Three

Sugar Is Satan

Now, we know we mentioned earlier that sugar was bad news for morning sickness and mood swings. We were sugarcoating it then. The real truth: Sugar totally sucks for you and your baby. Just when you thought you could pig out unabashedly. . . . Sorry. We know it's devastating news.

To reiterate and expand—sugar has a detrimental effect on mood swings. It enters the bloodstream like gangbusters—hard and fast. It causes blood sugar levels to spike, then crash. This crash can leave you feeling tired, depressed, or cranky. Now, you may be thinking, “Who cares? I’ll risk feeling crummy for a few hours.” Unfortunately, sugar is like crack, and eating it is like opening Pandora’s box. When your body starts to crash, it attempts to maintain balance by creating a craving. A craving for what? More sugar, duh.⁴⁰ Adding frequent sugar crashes to your already fluctuating hormones . . . you might as well check yourself into an asylum until the baby comes.

And when you get out, check yourself into a fat farm. ’Cause sugar will make you fat. Excess amounts of sugar are stored in the liver as glycogen. But when the liver is too full, those excess amounts are returned to the bloodstream as fatty acids.⁴¹ If you are in your second or third trimester, you need to be eating 200 to 300 extra calories every day. But if they’re coming from sugar, they’re empty calories. Meaning, they’re a total waste. You’ll be packing on the pounds, but neither you or baby will be getting any nutrients. There’s nothing nutritional or beneficial in refined processed sugar. Which is why you’ll never feel satisfied after eating it, and you’ll just want to eat more, more, more.

We know that pregnancy can be stressful at times, and we know that stress can cause us to eat crazy. Especially in the form of sugar. (Hell, even when we’re not stressed, we Americans eat our weight in sugar every year.)⁴² But it’s vital to find ways to cope with stress that aren’t harmful. When we e

foods high in sugar, we're usually also getting large amounts of fat. And a high intake of sugar and fat increases the risk of preeclampsia.⁴³ (Preeclampsia can lead to high blood pressure, kidney damage, seizures, and convulsions.) Kinda makes that Twinkie a little less appealing, huh?

How'd you like to have a bunch of annoying, little colds throughout your pregnancy? Studies show that eating sugar causes a decrease in white blood cell counts. And white blood cells are our first line of defense against illness. So eating sugar compromises your immune system, leaving you and your baby susceptible to colds, the flu, and all sorts of other trouble.⁴⁴

What sorts of other trouble? Here's a little biology lesson: When we eat, most of our food is broken down into glucose (a kind of sugar), which will provide us with energy. The glucose enters the bloodstream. And when everything is functioning well, the pancreas produces insulin, which allows the glucose to enter the liver, muscles, and fatty tissue.⁴⁵ But sometimes, the pancreas doesn't produce enough insulin, and the glucose remains in the bloodstream. This elevated level of glucose in the blood is called *diabetes*.

Pregnancy hormones make it harder for the body to utilize insulin. So in most cases, the pancreas will simply secrete more. But on occasion, the pancreas can't keep up with the body's demand for insulin. This results in gestational diabetes. Even though it only affects two to seven percent of expectant moms, it's one of the most common pregnancy health problems.⁴⁶

One concern with gestational diabetes is that high blood sugar levels can cause macrosomia, or an excessively large baby. This means the baby could be too big to enter the birth canal. Or that the baby's head will enter, but then his or her shoulders will get stuck.⁴⁷ Of course, this can be resolved by having a C-section. But even after delivery, the baby's not out of the water. Babies born to moms with gestational diabetes have a higher risk of hypoglycemia (low blood sugar), hypocalcemia (low calcium in the blood), polycythemia (an increase in red blood cells), and jaundice.⁴⁸

Even if they dodge those bullets, there is a higher likelihood that later in life they can develop diabetes or suffer from childhood or adult obesity.⁴⁹ Happy birthday! I got you diabetes and a lifetime of weight problems! I also increased the risk for you to be born with respiratory distress syndrome and heart abnormalities.⁵⁰ Compared with those with normal blood sugar levels, pregnant women with uncontrolled diabetes are three times more likely to have babies with malformed hearts.⁵¹

We aren't trying to give you nightmares about twenty-pound babies with rectangular-shaped hearts. When detected, gestational diabetes can be managed. So if you are diagnosed, don't despair. We just want you to do all you can to avoid these risks. And by that, we mean eating really well, staying away from sugar, and exercising (unless your doctor says you can't). Studies show that moderate exercise helps keep blood sugar levels controlled.⁵²

Gestational diabetes not only affects you *now*, but it affects your future, as well. About two-thirds of women who get gestational diabetes wind up getting it again during future pregnancies. Also, studies show that approximately 50 percent of women with gestational diabetes wind up developing type II diabetes within five years of giving birth.⁵³ Congratulations! You're a mom! And a diabetic!

Sugar isn't just the diabetes devil. It can do a lot of other damage, too. Everyone knows that sugar can cause gum disease and tooth decay. But most people don't know it can also lead to glycation—when sugar molecules abnormally attach to cells in the body—causing an acceleration in aging to the eyes, brain, and nervous system. Maybe that's a good thing; you won't be able to see or feel that it

also causing saggy skin, poor organ function, and arterial stiffness.⁵⁴ Not turned off yet? Refined sugar has also been linked to yeast overgrowth (check your undies), hyperactivity, attention deficit disorder, enlargement of the liver and kidneys, mental and emotional disorders, and an imbalance of neurotransmitters in the brain.⁵⁵ Yikes!

We know, in a sense, we're ruining your life, delivering all this bad news about sugar. You just wanted to read a light, fluffy, "how-to-eat when you're pregnant" book, and now we've gone and taken away your greatest joy. We're truly sorry. But we warned you in the Bitchclaimer. Here it is again, if you forgot:

"We didn't write this book to make friends. We wrote this book to help women eat right, ensuring successful pregnancies and healthy babies. So if you want to hear "everything in moderation," "an occasional glass of wine is fine," or any other candy-coated bullshit, pick another book. Skinny Bitch Bun in the Oven will tell you the truth about food and how what you eat affects your pregnancy and baby.

"Go make friends at your Lamaze classes. We're invested in making a difference in your life."

We're not just committed to healthy pregnancies and babies. We truly want you to continue to take care of yourself after you give birth and for the rest of your life. We want you to adopt a healthy lifestyle now and pass it on to your children. We genuinely care. So with that said, unfortunately, we have more bad news.

Refined sugar isn't the only sweetener that sucks. High fructose corn syrup (HFCS) blows, too. When you ingest natural sugars (like those found in fruits or whole grains), your brain signals to your body that it's satisfied and that you don't need to eat any more. With HFCS, this doesn't occur. So high intakes of HFCS can lead to obesity, which increases your risk of type II diabetes and heart disease. Our livers don't metabolize HFCS the same way they do other sugars. HFCS can increase the blood level of triglycerides (bad fats that clog arteries and cause cardiovascular disease).⁵⁶ It's hard to find information on how HFCS affects developing fetuses. But the fact that it's so bad for our bodies leads us to believe it's doubly bad for developing babies. And unfortunately, because HFCS is so cheap to produce, food manufacturers love it and put it in almost everything. Check your pantries, refrigerators, and freezers. Then throw all the shit away!

While you're at it, get rid of your Sweet 'N Low, too, since saccharin (found in Sweet 'N Low) can easily cross the placenta and enter the fetal bloodstream.⁵⁷ It's believed that an accumulation of saccharin can cause bladder cancer to the fetus.⁵⁸

And artificial sweeteners made with aspartame, like NutraSweet and Equal, might be even more sinister than sugar and HFCS combined. So many people have been sickened by this shit that there are aspartame victim support groups. Some of the ninety-two aspartame side effects listed by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) include memory loss, nerve cell damage, migraines, brain lesions, joint pain, Alzheimer's, bloating, nervous system disorders, hair loss, food cravings, weight gain, and reproductive disorders.⁵⁹

So how the hell did this poison get FDA approval? Well, where there's a will (\$), there's a way. And in the case of aspartame, former Senator Howard Metzenbaum said it "was approved by the FDA in circumstances that can only be described as troubling."⁶⁰ He could've been referring to any number of things:

- When founder G.D. Searle put aspartame before the FDA for approval, it was denied *eig*

times. In 1975, the FDA put together a task force to review Searle's testing methods. Task force team leader Phillip Brodsky said he "had never seen anything as bad as Searle's testing" and called the test results "manipulated."⁶¹

- One FDA statistician called data on aspartame "worrisome." An FDA toxicologist testified before Congress that aspartame could cause brain tumors.⁶²

- In 1977, the FDA asked the U.S. attorney's office to start grand jury proceedings against Searle for "knowingly misrepresenting findings and concealing material facts and making false statements in aspartame safety tests." Shortly after, the U.S. attorney leading the investigation against Searle was offered a job by the law firm that was representing Searle. Later that same year, he resigned as the U.S. attorney and withdrew from the case, delaying the grand jury investigation. This caused the statute of limitations on the charges to run out, and the investigation was dropped. And he accepted the job with Searle's law firm!⁶³

- In 1980, a review by the Public Board of Inquiry set up by the FDA determined that aspartame should not be approved. The board said it had "not been presented with proof of reasonable certainty that aspartame is safe for use as a food additive." In 1981, a new FDA Commissioner was appointed. Despite the fact that three out of six scientists advised against approval, the commissioner decided to overrule the scientific review panel and allow aspartame into limited dry goods. In 1983, he got it approved for beverages even though the National Soft Drink Association urged the FDA to delay approval until further testing could be done. That same year, the commissioner left the FDA amid charges of impropriety. The Internal Department of Health and Human Services was investigating him for accepting gratuities from FDA-regulated companies. He went to work as a consultant for Searle's public relations firm!⁶⁴

- The FDA finally urged Congress to prosecute Searle for giving the government false and incomplete test results on aspartame. However, the two government attorneys assigned to the case decided not to prosecute. Later, they went to work for the law firm that represented Searle!⁶⁵

- In 1996, the FDA approved aspartame for use without restrictions.⁶⁶

- A study funded by Monsanto (the company that owned NutraSweet) was conducted to see if there were possible birth defects associated with consuming aspartame. After preliminary data revealed damaging information, the study was cut off.⁶⁷ (Did we mention that aspartame is a *billion* dollar industry?⁶⁸)

Dr. John Olney is a neuropathologist, neuroscientist, and a world expert on excitotoxicity. (In layman's terms, excitotoxicity is when brain cells get "excited" to death.) Dr. Olney's own lab studies demonstrated that aspartame could cause excitotoxicity. Using the existing data of other scientists, he also published a study reporting a 65 percent increase in human brain tumors since the FDA approved aspartame.⁶⁹

When methyl alcohol, a component of aspartame, enters the body, it turns into formaldehyde. Formaldehyde is toxic and carcinogenic (cancer-causing).⁷⁰ Studies conducted at the University of Barcelona revealed that formaldehyde causes breaks in DNA. Men and women who consume aspartame can have breaks in their sperm and egg DNA. This can increase risks of cancer and developmental problems in their offspring.⁷¹ (So your husband needs to get off the junk, too!)

Former neurosurgeon Dr. Russell Blaylock is one of the world's foremost authorities on the biochemistry of aspartame and its effect on brain function. He states quite clearly that "pregnant women should never consume foods containing aspartame. . . . The aspartic acid, phenylalanine, and

methanol [components of aspartame] are all known to produce abnormal development of a baby brain.”⁷²

Also regarded as one of the foremost “aspartamologists,” three-time Pulitzer Prize nominee⁷³ Dr. H. J. Roberts is vehemently opposed, as well. “Having been involved in medical practice, teaching, and the authorship of texts for a half a century, I do not casually make statements that might jeopardize a longstanding reputation. . . .⁷⁴ I continue to urge ALL pregnant women and mothers who breast-feed to avoid aspartame products. . . . The manifestation of aspartame disease in young children include severe headache, convulsions, unexplained vision loss, rashes, asthma, gastrointestinal problems, obesity, marked weight loss, hypoglycemia, diabetes, addiction (probably largely due to the methyl alcohol), hyperthyroidism, and a host of neuropsychiatric features [including] extreme fatigue, irritability, hyperactivity, depression, antisocial behavior (including suicide), poor school performance, the deterioration of intelligence, and brain tumors.”⁷⁵ Hmm . . . have a diet soda that will last fifteen minutes or have a fucked up kid that will last a lifetime? Tough decision.

Despite all the drama and trauma related to aspartame, more than two-thirds of adults in our society consume it in some form. Approximately 40 percent of children do, as well.⁷⁶

Many nutritionists and healthcare providers think aspartame is safe because it’s composed of two amino acids (phenylalanine and aspartic acid) that are also found in protein foods. However, protein foods have more than just the two amino acids found in aspartame. The other amino acids serve as “neutralizers.” So when you’re ingesting aspartame, your bloodstream is getting “flooded” with the two amino acids. Taking the two amino acids out of their natural state is like taking words out of context.⁷⁷ Bad news bears.

Chances are, your ob/gyn will tell you it’s fine to consume aspartame in moderate doses unless you have the genetic disorder phenylketonuria (PKU). (People with PKU can’t metabolize phenylalanine.)⁷⁸ So if your doctor says aspartame is okay in moderate doses, does that mean you should consume it? No! Get your head out of your ass. Smarten up. Get off the diet soda, chewing gum, and all the other crap that contains aspartame. And never look back.

So no refined sugar, no Sweet ’N Low, no NutraSweet, and no Equal. We can already hear you diet soda junkies clucking away: “But what about Splenda?” “Is Splenda okay?” Hell to the no! Splenda’s marketing slogan is, “made from sugar so it tastes like sugar.” This is how they get us to think “Hey, it’s natural. It’s made from sugar.” But Splenda is about as natural as a breast implant filled with soybean oil. It’s made by altering the molecular structure of sugar!⁷⁹ Sucralose, the end result, is like Franken-sugar. The reason Splenda’s touted as being zero calories is because the body can’t even metabolize it!⁸⁰ And the FDA approval process surrounding Splenda is even more McShady than the hijinks surrounding aspartame. Only two human trials were completed and published before the FDA deemed sucralose safe!⁸¹ Two! It gets worse. You may want to sit down. The two trials *combined* consisted of a mere thirty-six people, with only twenty-three actually given the product!⁸² Wait. Not done. The trial only lasted four friggin’ days!⁸³ Four days! Wait. There’s more. The study only examined sucralose’s effect on friggin’ tooth decay!⁸⁴ After FDA approval, Splenda conducted a “long-term” human toxicity study. For three months.⁸⁵ Three months?! What, are consumers on the way to going to buy Splenda products for three months, and then stop? Where we’re from—Earth—that’s the biggest pile of steaming bullshit ever! So, is Splenda safe to consume during your pregnancy? Couldn’t tell ya. It wasn’t one of the few, pathetic, sham studies they conducted.⁸⁶

If you aren't thoroughly turned off refined sugar and artificial sweeteners by now, you're a jackass. This is our last attempt to get you off the crack pipe: Surely you've seen those stupid deodorant commercials, "Strong enough for a man, but pH balanced for a woman," right? Well, we have no idea what the hell they're talking about. But we do know that everything we eat has its own pH balance. When food is digested, it leaves an acid or alkaline "ash" in the body, depending on the food's mineral content. Surprise, surprise: Refined sugars and artificial sweeteners are acid forming.⁸⁷ (So are coffee—both regular and decaf—and other foods that we'll get to later.) When our bodies get too acidic, we're much more prone to illness. It can be something minor, like skin problems, allergies, headaches, colds, or yeast infections. Or, we can experience major trauma—severe damage to the thyroid gland, liver, and adrenal glands. Also, if our bodies become too acidic, they'll withdraw minerals from our bones and muscles.⁸⁸ Ever hear of osteoporosis? Keep gorging on the refined sugar and artificial sweeteners and you'll be a bag of bones in no time. That is if cancer doesn't get you first; cancer cells thrive in acidic environments.⁸⁹ Last bit of bad news: Acidic foods cause your body to produce free radicals, in order to keep acid away from your organs.⁹⁰

(Now, logically, you would think that citrus fruits are acidic, but actually, when they enter the body, they are alkalizing. They contain potassium and calcium, which are alkalizing minerals. They also have a high percentage of alkaline salts. Nearly all fruits, vegetables, and legumes are alkaline when they enter the body.)⁹¹

We know this is a lot to swallow. And if you're outraged at the FDA and companies who profit from poisoning us—good. You should be. But don't sit there stewing in hate and rage. Not good for the baby. Get off your arse, clean out your kitchen, and throw all that shit in the trash. And don't be mad at us! We had to tell you.

And it may sound impossible and unbelievable now, but you *can* kick the sugar/artificial sweetener habit. And if you do, you'll really get a sense of how shitty the stuff makes you feel if you try eating it again after going a while without it.

We realize it's a tall order, and that for some people, death would be a better option than giving up sweets. If you're of that ilk, there are some ways to help curb your sweet tooth. For starters, drink water. Many times, a glass of water will erase a craving. It sounds lame, but it works. Another trick is simply waiting out the craving. Studies have shown that if you wait fifteen to thirty minutes, the desire to eat junk will pass. So get up, go for a walk, make a phone call, work on your nursery, or do something to busy yourself. You may forget all about the donut. If that doesn't work, brush your teeth. There's nothing like clean teeth and fresh, minty breath to make junk food less appealing. Or have a cup of decaf peppermint tea; it comes across as sweet in a confusing way. (FYI: These little ploys work for all junk food, not just sugar.)

But if you gotta have something sweet, eat something sweet. Hold on—don't get too excited. Fruit. We're talking about fruit. Fruit is sweet. And it's good for you and baby. As pathetic and miserable as it sounds, you'll be astounded by this little caper. Fruit totally squelches sugar cravings. Try it a few times before you go pissing all over it.

If you tried all the above and you're still dying for something sweet, eat something sweet for crying out loud. (Now you can get excited.) Food is our passion, and we never want to feel deprived. So when we want something sweet, we eat it. We just don't eat our old, standard crap with sugar, high fructose corn syrup, or artificial sweeteners. The following substitutes are less processed than regular sugar and less hazardous than corn syrup and artificial sweeteners: evaporated cane juice, Sucanat, brown

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