

# Spring Break Safety for Pregnant and Breastfeeding Women: Tips for a Fun and Safe Holiday

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Spring break is often associated with young college students flocking to the beaches to take a break from their studies. However, it is now embraced by a diverse crowd, including families with pregnant and breastfeeding women. Spring break typically takes place between March and April each year, leading to masses of people traveling by planes, trains, and automobiles. Fun times are possible for everyone, and we have guidance to increase the chances that your travels and experiences will be comfortable and safe for you and your baby.

## **Check-In with Your Doctor**

For most pregnant women, traveling by airline, train, car, or bus is generally safe until close to their due date. Regardless of your trimester, a quick check-in with your doctor is essential to ensure you are cleared to travel.

- **First Trimester:** If you are experiencing pregnancy-related **nausea**, prepare ahead with needed medications and a plan to stay hydrated.
- **Second Trimester:** If you are healthy, this is a great time to travel.
- **Third Trimester:** You should be fine to travel, but keep in mind that if you go into early labor, you don't want to be far from high-quality obstetrical care. Check for hospital locations at your destination.

## **Check for Infectious Disease Warnings**

If you are traveling outside of the U.S., check for disease warnings or recommended vaccines for your destination on the [CDC Travelers' Health page](#). Additionally, if your destination has mosquitoes, use **insect repellants** to reduce the risk of exposure to infectious diseases.

## **Sun Exposure and Heat**

Prolonged sun exposure can lead to overheating and dehydration, and in severe cases, heat stroke. High fever is a potential concern for pregnant individuals in any trimester. Prevention is key:

- Keep hydrated.
- Protect against direct sun for prolonged periods (sit under an umbrella or go indoors).
- Use sunscreen.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Avoid **alcohol** and limit **caffeine**, as they can increase dehydration.

## **Sunscreen**

Everyone, including pregnant and breastfeeding women, should use sunscreen year-round. While there is some evidence that chemical sunscreens can penetrate the body in very small amounts, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) recommends the use of effective sunscreen. For breastfeeding women,

remember that sun exposure does not provide enough vitamin D for your baby; the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends 400 IU of vitamin D daily for breastfed babies.

## Dietary Concerns

One of the highlights of travel is enjoying local food. For pregnant women, the risks from food-borne illnesses remain the same whether at home or on vacation. Avoid **unpasteurized milk products**, **undercooked meats**, and **fish** from risky categories.

## Alcohol

**Alcoholic beverages** may be a destination goal for many, but pregnant and breastfeeding women are urged to continue following the warnings:

- **Pregnant Women:** It is crucial to avoid **alcohol**, as there is no known safe amount to drink. The risks to the developing baby are significant and can be devastating. Increasingly, restaurants are creating delicious and inviting mocktails (non-alcohol) and other beverages, offering an alternative that does not single out a person from the crowd.
- **Breastfeeding Women:** Limiting alcohol is beneficial as it can decrease the amount of breastmilk produced. It is recommended to breastfeed after two hours per drink to reduce the risk of exposure to the baby and developing brain.

Following these recommendations and reminders can help prevent exposures and experiences that could later cause grief and anxiety. Prepare well and enjoy your holiday! Ideally, a well-planned spring break will lift your spirits, provide a mental health break, allow you to enjoy new or favored foods, and create new and wonderful memories.

## References and Additional Information:

CDC:

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/sun-exposure>

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/heat-stress/about/illnesses.html>

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/sun-exposure>

<https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding-special-circumstances/hcp/diet-micronutrients/vitamin-d.html>

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>

ACOG

<https://www.acog.org/womens-health/faqs/travel-during-pregnancy>

Questions? Call 866.626.6847 | Text 855.999.3525 | Email or Chat at [MotherToBaby.org](https://www.MotherToBaby.org).

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You may have heard recently that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has banned Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FD&C) Red No. 3. In this blog, we will review details about the ban, including why it was enacted, and the timeline for removing FD&C Red No. 3 from products. Our goal is to equip you with information to help make informed decisions. Be sure to check back, as we'll continue updating this post with the latest developments.

All food dyes, called color additives, must be approved for use by the FDA before manufacturers can use them. Color additives can be synthetic (lab made) or naturally derived from plants, animals and minerals. Manufacturers submit information about safety and manufacturing to the FDA in order to receive approval.

## What is Red No. 3?

FD&C Red No. 3., also found on food labels as Red 3 or Red No. 3, is a synthetic food dye that gives foods and drinks a bright, cherry-red color. Red No. 3 can be found in some cake icing, candies, and other food items. Red No. 3 is also used in some oral medications and supplements.

Red No. 3 is a complicated formula for those of us not in the food manufacturing business. Specifically, the FDA reports that the color additive FD&C No. 3 is monohydrate of 9-6-hydroxy-2,4,5,7-tetraiodo-3H-xanthen-3-one, disodium salt, with smaller amounts of lower imidinated fluoresceins.

## Why is Red No. 3 being banned?

Red No. 3 food dye is being banned because studies found that at high doses, the dye caused cancer in male laboratory rats. Studies in other animals or in humans did not show an increased chance for cancer.

The way that the food dye causes cancer in laboratory rats involves a mechanism not present in humans, so it is not known if this could also be a risk for humans.

### **Has Red No. 3 been associated with birth defects or problems with breastfeeding?**

Studies have not been done to research this.

### **When is the ban taking effect?**

On January 15, 2025, the FDA announced that Red No. 3 will be banned from all products, including medications and foods. However, this ban allows manufacturers time to phase out the use of Red No. 3. Manufacturers who use Red No. 3 in food will have until January 15, 2027 to remove it from their products. Manufacturers of oral medications and supplements will have until January 18, 2028 to remove it.

### **Is FD&C Red No. 3 used in cosmetics or topical medications?**

Red No. 3 has not been allowed in cosmetics, or topical medications, by the FDA since at least 1990.

### **How can I confirm if my food has Red No. 3?**

To learn if your food has Red No. 3, look at nutrition facts on the product's label. The nutrition facts label lists calories and serving size, as well as other information. Below the nutrition facts, you will find an ingredients list. Ingredients are listed in order of those found in highest amounts to those found in smallest amounts in the product. For example, if the first ingredient is water, this means that most of the product is water, and each ingredient listed after that is found in the product in smaller amounts.

Here is a sample of a products' ingredients. Red No.3 is listed as less than 2% of the product.



INGREDIENTS: SUGAR, VEGETABLE SHORTENING (PALM, SUNFLOWER AND HYDROGENATED COTTONSEED OILS), WATER, CORN SYRUP. CONTAINS LESS THAN 2% OF THE FOLLOWING: SORBITOL, YELLOW 6 LAKE, RED 40 LAKE, RED 3, METHYL PARABEN, PROPYL PARABEN, PHOSPHORIC ACID, MODIFIED CORNSTARCH, SALT, CORNSTARCH, NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL FLAVOR, POTASSIUM SORBATE (PRESERVATIVE), CITRIC ACID, SUNFLOWER OIL, ROSEMARY EXTRACT (PRESERVATIVE), TOCOPHEROLS, MONO- AND DIGLYCERIDES, POLYSORBATE 60.

You can learn more from the FDA announcement here: [FDA Consumer Announcement](#)

### **FDA Red No 3**

FDA Red No 3 composition

FDA Color Additives for Consumers

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