

# Ep. 92 - Coffee, Sushi, Medicine and More in Pregnancy

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Expecting a baby often comes with a long list of questions—and a lot of conflicting information. Can you really drink coffee? What about sushi or soft cheese? Which cold medications are ok in pregnancy? And how should you handle everyday exposures like cleaning products?

In this episode of The MotherToBaby Podcast, host Chris Stallman, Certified Genetic Counselor and mom of four, is joined by returning guests Angela Messer and Kirstie Perrotta, both experienced teratogen information specialists (and moms themselves). Together, they sort through some of the most common pregnancy “do’s and don’ts,” offering clarity with evidence-based insights.

In this episode you’ll learn:

- ☰ How much caffeine experts suggest during pregnancy
- ☐ The truth about soft cheeses and why pasteurization matters
- ☐ Sushi and mercury exposure—what to consider and what to limit
- ☐ Tips for managing allergies and colds while pregnant or breastfeeding
- ☐ Guidance on handling cleaning products and reducing exposures
- ☐ Why supplements and “natural” remedies aren’t always the best option
- ☐ The importance of folic acid in prenatal vitamins
- ☐ Real stories from Angela, Kirstie, and Chris about what worried them during their own pregnancies

Whether you’re pregnant, breastfeeding, or supporting someone who is, this conversation offers reassurance, practical advice, and a reminder: you’re doing your best, and you’re not alone.

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

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Group A strep might sound like a simple sore throat—but for many children and families in American Samoa, it can have life-threatening consequences. In this episode of the MotherToBaby Podcast, we sit down with Dr. Anaise Uso, a public health leader and mother, who shares both her professional and deeply personal experiences with strep infections, rheumatic fever, and rheumatic heart disease (RHD).

Together, we explore:

- What Group A Strep is and the common signs of strep throat and skin infections.
- How untreated infections can progress into rheumatic fever and, ultimately, rheumatic heart disease.
- The unique challenges in American Samoa, where children are three times more likely to be affected than in neighboring Pacific Islands.
- The role of screening, prevention, and treatment programs, including antibiotics and regular monitoring.
- A personal story of Dr. Uso's son, who was diagnosed with RHD at age three, and how their family manages his care.
- How partnerships with CDC, AMCHP, and MotherToBaby are helping build resources, raise awareness, and strengthen prevention efforts.

- This episode highlights why early detection, treatment, and community awareness are critical - not only to protect children's immediate health, but also to prevent lifelong complications.

□ Resources mentioned in this episode:

- MotherToBaby: Group A Strep Fact Sheet
- MotherToBaby: Rheumatic Heart Disease Fact Sheet
- Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs (AMCHP)

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With so much information online, it can feel overwhelming to know what's trustworthy—especially when you're pregnant, breastfeeding, or planning a family. In this episode of The MotherToBaby Podcast, host Chris Stallman, CGC, sits down with Bridget Maloney, MS, CGC of the University of Arizona and MotherToBaby Arizona to unpack how to separate credible health information from clickbait headlines.

In this episode, they discuss:

-How to tell if a website or social media post is reliable

-Common “red flags” and buzzwords to look out for

-Why even well-intentioned online advice can sometimes mislead

-How to double-check what you see online with healthcare providers

-Where to turn for evidence-based resources you can understand

-Whether you're scrolling through social media or doing a late-night search about a medication or food, this episode will help you navigate today's flood of information with confidence and calm.

Learn more or connect with our experts at [MotherToBaby.org](https://www.MotherToBaby.org)

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What happens when epilepsy meets pregnancy planning? In this episode of The MotherToBaby Podcast, host Chris Stallman, MS, CGC—a genetic counselor, mom of four, and teratogen information specialist—talks with Dr. Kristi McIntosh from the University of British Columbia.

Dr. McIntosh shares her powerful personal and professional journey—from being diagnosed with epilepsy at age ten to navigating fertility challenges, medication changes, and high-risk pregnancies. As both a scientist and a mom, she offers unique insights into:

- Managing anti-epileptic drugs during pregnancy
- What EEGs reveal about brain activity and seizure patterns
- Balancing medication safety with seizure control
- The realities of breastfeeding while on seizure medication
- Why early conversations and self-advocacy are key

Her story underscores the importance of education, planning, and open communication between patients and providers.

- Tune in to hear how informed decisions and early preparation can make all the difference for people with epilepsy who are considering pregnancy.

Listen on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Audible and anywhere you listen to podcasts!

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Managing ADHD during pregnancy can feel overwhelming—especially when juggling appointments, medications, mood changes, and everyday life. In this episode of The MotherToBaby Podcast, genetic counselor and teratogen information specialist Chris Stallman, CGC sits down with returning guest Dr. Christy Pratt, a pharmacist at Kaiser Permanente Colorado, for an in-depth, practical conversation about ADHD in pregnancy and breastfeeding.

### ***Together, they discuss:***

- How ADHD symptoms can shift during pregnancy
- What to consider when deciding whether to continue stimulant or non-stimulant medications
- How co-occurring conditions like anxiety or depression affect treatment decisions
- Why risk-benefit conversations are essential—and individualized
- Non-medication strategies and organization tools that actually help
- How healthcare providers can better support pregnant patients with ADHD

- What Dr. Pratt wishes more people understood about ADHD as a real, physiological condition
- Dr. Pratt also shares insights from her innovative program at Kaiser Permanente, where newly pregnant patients receive personalized risk-benefit consultations about their medications.
- Whether you're pregnant, planning a pregnancy, supporting someone with ADHD, or working in maternal-child health, this episode offers validation, clarity, and evidence-based guidance—always centered on achieving the best outcomes for both parent and baby.

**Key takeaway: “We need a healthy mama to grow a healthy baby.” —Dr. Christy Pratt**

For more evidence-based information about exposures during pregnancy and breastfeeding, visit [MotherToBaby.org](https://www.MotherToBaby.org).

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