Avoiding Meat During Pregnancy Linked with Later Substance Misuse by Children

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Lower meat consumption by women during pregnancy was linked with an increased risk of substance misuse by their children during adolescence. Lower meat consumption by women during pregnancy was linked with an increased risk of substance misuse by their children during adolescence. The findings come from a study published in *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*.

In the study that included 5109 women and their offspring, less frequent consumption of red meat, poultry, and meat products during pregnancy were associated with greater risks of adverse alcohol, cannabis and cigarette use.

Lower meat consumption disproportionally increased the risks of offspring substance misuse among mothers with optimally functional variants of the gene that encodes a vitamin B12 transport protein. Because vitamin B12 insufficiencies are highly likely to have a contributing role to the study’s findings, greater meat consumption need not be advised to modify this risk. For example, fortification of foods with vegetarian sources of vitamin B12 and more widespread use of supplements may be other options.

“The *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans* includes recommendations for healthy vegetarian eating patterns,” said Dr. Joseph Hibbeln, lead author of the study. “Our study points to the need to investigate potential health impacts, and solutions, for some women who choose to restrict certain food categories during pregnancy.”

Additional Information


About Journal

*Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research* was founded by the National Council on Alcoholism (now the NCADD). Alcoholism and alcohol abuse cause significant social and medical harm, and research into the etiology and consequences of alcohol use is essential to guide prevention, treatment and policy. *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research* gives readers direct access to the most significant and current research findings on the nature and management of alcoholism and alcohol-related disorders. Each month this journal brings basic science researchers and health care professionals the latest clinical studies and research findings on alcoholism, alcohol-induced syndromes and organ damage. The journal includes categories of basic science, clinical research, and treatment methods.

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