

As you'll be tee-total this Christmas, why not indulge your sweet tooth with plenty of delicious dessert

Yuletide yumms

FACE THE FESTIVE FEASTING WITH CONFIDENCE, Sarah Dawson AS ROUNDS UP OF THE SEASONAL TREATS TO ENJOY AND THE ONES TO AVOID

When you're pregnant, you're bombarded with information on what you should and shouldn't eat, but when it comes to Christmas – traditionally a time for indulgence – things can get even more complicated. Here's your no-nonsense guide to what festive favourites you can add to the menu this Christmas and what's best to avoid:

MEAT

Turkey is a Christmas dinner staple, and it's one you won't have to miss out on this year. As with all meat and poultry, make sure it's cooked thoroughly throughout – it needs to be steaming hot, with no trace of pink or blood. The same goes for sausages wrapped in bacon, which can also be enjoyed if cooked through. Cured meats such as Parma ham and salami, however, are best avoided (there is a risk they could contain toxoplasmosis-causing parasites), along with all types of pâté. Liver pâtés contain too much vitamin A, which can harm your baby's development, and even fish or vegetarian pâté can contain listeria, too.

Seafood

If Christmas morning without smoked salmon for breakfast is unthinkable, you're in luck! It's safe to eat when pregnant, as long as it's been kept cold and fresh – probably best to give it a miss if it's been sat out on a buffet for a while, though. There's a lot of conflicting advice out there with regards to eating shellfish during pregnancy, but the NHS advises you not to eat any raw shellfish, like oysters, mussels and scallops, due to the risk of food poisoning – not fun when pregnant. You can eat shellfish if it's been thoroughly cooked and cold, pre-cooked prawns are fine too.

VEGETABLES

We all know how important it is to get our five-a-day, and filling up on fresh veg when pregnant is great for you and your baby's health. If you grow your own, or like to stock up at farm shops, always make sure all traces of soil have been washed off your vegetables before cooking. They're a Christmas dinner classic and, whether you love them or hate them, cooked Brussels

sprouts are packed with amazing goodness. Full of folate to help with fetal development and magnesium to help build and repair body tissue, pile these up on your plate on 25 December and your baby will reap the rewards!

Cheese

Christmas is the time for cheeseboards, but, as any pregnant lady will know, working out what cheese you can and can't eat is a bit of a minefield. The good news? Hard cheeses, including festive favourite, Stilton, are fine to indulge in, even if they are unpasteurised. However, it's recommended that pregnant women don't eat any blue veined soft cheeses, like gorgonzola, and Roquefort, or mould-ripened soft cheese, like brie and camembert, due to the risk of listeria.

PUDDING

With a severe lack of champagne or port over the festive season, it's only right that you get to treat yourself to an extra helping of dessert! Mince pies, trifle and Christmas cake all get the thumbs up, as well as any shop-bought ice cream. One thing to keep in mind is the use of raw eggs in things like homemade mousse, custard, meringues, icing and cheesecake. These used to be considered unsafe during pregnancy, but now, as long as the eggs have the red British Lion Quality stamp on the shell, they're highly unlikely to contain salmonella. If you're eating out, or don't know whether the eggs used are Lion Quality or not, it's best to be on the safe side and opt for something else.

Nuts

You might have heard that nuts should be avoided when you're pregnant, but government guidelines were updated in 2009 and now it's safe to eat them, unless you're allergic to nuts, of course, or a health professional advises you not to. Peanuts are a good source of protein and folic acid, while walnuts are packed with omega-3 (essential for your baby's brain and nervous system), so there's plenty of good reasons to keep the party nut bowls filled up this year. **1**