



Prairie Love Midwifery

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Encouraging Confidence and Enlightenment in Your Birth Experience

Living with Cats While Pregnant

What you need to know...

- Cat feces is known to contain a microscopic parasite called *Toxoplasma gondii* or Toxoplasmosis. This parasite causes the mother to develop an infection that she may pass on to her fetus. The symptoms are difficult to differentiate from a common cold and include; swollen lymph glands, fatigue and aches. The only way to confirm infection is via a blood test.
- A mother runs a 50% chance of passing the infection to her baby and a 17% chance of passing it during the first trimester. This infection may cause blindness, hydrocephalus, jaundice, neurological problems or eye lesions in the newborn. 85% of those infected do not show symptoms until around 20 years of age, these include; chorioretinitis, inflammation of the retina, choroids, mental retardation or learning disabilities.

What to do to...

- Avoid cleaning cat litter boxes while pregnant as well as sick cats. Wear gloves if you must clean it, have someone else do the cleaning and have them clean it daily.
- Thoroughly cook all meat and clean all surfaces that have contacted raw meat, including hands. Do not feed your cat raw or undercooked meat.
- Avoid unpasteurized dairy products.
- Keep your cat indoors to prevent her from eating contaminated material if necessary.
- Wear gloves while gardening. Wash your hands after petting a cat.
- Thoroughly wash all fruits and vegetables before eating or cooking them.
- In a healthy mother, symptoms usually disappear in a few weeks. Some doctors recommend antibiotic therapy or may recommend no treatment in mild cases.

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