FDA site offers info to keep pregnant women safe from food illness: a NetWellness column

By Plain Dealer guest columnist
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If you or someone you care about is pregnant, what can you do to make sure that the food the mother eats is safe?

Pregnant women are among the high-risk groups of people who have to be extra careful to avoid food-borne illness. During pregnancy, the immune system is weakened. This makes it harder for the body's natural defenses to protect both mother and fetus from microorganisms.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's newly updated food safety web site offers both at-a-glance and in-depth resources on food safety information for women who are pregnant or thinking of getting pregnant. Just click on "Keep Food Safe," then "For Specific Groups of People." It offers basic steps for keeping food safe, as well as information on specific risks related to pregnancy, such as Listeria, methylmercury and toxoplasma.

Other at-risk groups who can find targeted information on the Web site include older adults and persons with chronic illnesses. And the FDA site offers a boatload of other information on just about anything you can think of related to food safety. Among the offerings:

- Communication is a cornerstone of good nursing: A Nurse's Journal

This week's NetWellness column is authored by Lydia Medeiros, a professor and extension specialist for the Department of Human Nutrition at The Ohio State University.
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