

Mother's diet linked to premature birth

March 4 2014

Pregnant women who eat a "prudent" diet rich in vegetables, fruits, whole grains and who drink water have a significantly reduced risk of preterm delivery, suggests a study published in *BMJ* today.

A "traditional" dietary pattern of boiled potatoes, [fish](#) and cooked vegetables was also linked to a significantly lower risk.

Although these findings cannot establish causality, they support [dietary advice](#) to [pregnant women](#) to eat a [balanced diet](#) including vegetables, fruit, whole [grains](#), and fish and to drink water.

Preterm delivery (before 37 weeks of pregnancy) is associated with significant short and long term ill-health and accounts for almost 75% of all newborn deaths.

Evidence shows that a mother's dietary habits can directly affect her unborn child, so researchers based in Sweden, Norway and Iceland set out to examine whether a link exists between maternal diet and preterm delivery.

Using data from the Norwegian Mother and Child Cohort Study, they analysed preterm births among 66,000 women between 2002 and 2008.

To be included, participants had to be free of diabetes, have delivered a live single baby, and completed a validated food frequency questionnaire on dietary habits during the first four to five months of pregnancy.

Factors that may have affected the results (known as confounding), including a mother's age, history of preterm delivery and education were taken into account. Preterm delivery was defined as delivery between 22 and

Citation: Mother's diet linked to premature birth (2014, March 4) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-03-mother-diet-linked-premature-birth.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.