

# 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. 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 disproportionately 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."

**More information:** *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*

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