

Pregnancy and the Overprotective Husband

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At first she thought her husband was the sweetest thing ever. Once they saw the pink line revealing her pregnancy he began offering to carry anything and everything in her hands (grocery bags, shopping bags and even her heavy purse!). He'd clean the dishes so she could rest at the table; repair the computer so she wouldn't have to bend down to the floor to reach the hard drive.

What a wonderful husband, she thought. And then he started on her love of tuna fish sandwiches. "If the doctor says you shouldn't eat tuna more than twice a week, there must be something wrong with it. I don't want you to eat ANY tuna while pregnant." They argued, he won. What if something happened to the baby? She couldn't live with the guilt of the tuna.

Then he was drinking beer. She wanted a sip, just a sip. "Are you crazy?????" No sip. She began to lie about her lunches to hide the fact that she ate bologna (a prepared lunch meat – also on his do-not-eat list). This pregnancy had turned her husband into a paranoid barrel of overprotective obnoxiousness.

Nowadays we like to say "we are pregnant," as if the father-to-be has a 50% role in the pregnancy (in my opinion he had a 50% role in the impregnation and will hopefully have a 50% role in parenthood, but maybe only a 5 or 10% role in pregnancy). He attends the doctor appointments, searches for do's and don'ts of pregnancy online, reads the baby books and gives the mom-to-be advice and support. Sometimes that advice is going to conflict with the mom-to-be's opinion. How should this be handled?

Answer: Get the Facts: If you and your partner start discussing the effects of mercury on a fetus, don't try to remember what you read, instead go and read it together. Do the math, figure out the amount in a can of tuna. Does the research on mercury apply to that amount of tuna or to a five times that amount?

Then Get Approval: Tentatively agree to a reasonable limit and then ask your doctor to approve this agreement at the next appointment. Do this for each and every point of disagreement.

It's not fun to negotiate your food intake and exercise regimen, but at least it's temporary and it's better than the alternative: Telling your partner that he has no say in what you eat is only going to increase the fighting and stress in your household. The goal is to use the fact-finding mission to reach compromises that you can both live with.

Do you or did you have an overprotective husband during pregnancy? Are you an overprotective husband? How do you and your partner find a compromise?

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