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Effects of Eating Fast Food during Pregnancy

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ABSTRACT: Fast food culture is an emerging trend among the younger generation. Fast food restaurants are primed to maximize the speed, efficiency and conformity. The menu is kept limited and standardized essentially to minimize the waiting time so that the customers eat quickly and leave. This perspective delineates the emerging fast food culture in India, its impact on pregnant women and strategies to counter it. Fast foods are widely available through variety of outlets. Sodas, cold drinks, chips and many other foods of low nutritional value. On a typical day that fast food is eaten, pregnant women consume substantially more total energy and have worse dietary quality compared with a typical day without fast food. There are much greater side effects of fast food and people are unaware of its ill consequences. It can tend to many detrimental diseases. Prolonged use of fast food is also a cause of health problems, obesity, indigestion problem and high cholesterol. Chubbiness, increase in cholesterol levels, dietary deficiencies, cardiac disorders, loss of muscle mass, depression, sexual dysfunction, asthma, strokes, type 2 diabetes, cancer liver disease, cancer and cardiovascular diseases can all be caused by eating fast food on a regular basis. Fast foods have high level of fat and sugars that are not only unhealthy but addictive and that creates a vicious cycle making it hard for pregnant women to choose healthy food. High content of trans fat in commercially available fast foods predispose.

KEYWORDS: Fast food, Pregnant women, Effects, Deficiencies, Disease and Problems.

I. INTRODUCTION

Every ounce of food that you eat while you are expecting plays a crucial role in the development of the fetus in your womb. From oily fried, chats, to ice cream at midnight, pregnant ladies have some pretty crazy food cravings during pregnancy and it is a common experience every pregnant lady has especially for unhealthy foods. It is hard not to give in to those cravings during your pregnancy. The extreme hormonal roller coaster ride that an expectant women experiences during this period is to be blamed for this. This intense hormonal changes plays a major role in altering your senses of taste and smell when you are expecting. So even though potato chips were never your favorite, never be surprised about yourself if you find yourself drooling before a pack of Chips, or waking up at mid-night for a bunch of fries. Though there are plenty of excuses in support of these odd cravings but junk foods are always labeled as harmful. Moreover researchers have found that those would be mothers who have higher inclination towards eating junk food are more likely to have pregnant women with mental health problem. Consumption of junk food is also harmful for the women who are planning a baby in the near future. However, while some of the cravings are fine, craving for junk food can be hazardous to both mother and the developing baby.

Obesity is one of the most important public health problems facing pregnant women in many developed countries. Health authorities are concerned because obese pregnant women may suffer a number of health problems, are likely to remain overweight and are at risk of serious, chronic conditions including cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and fatty liver disease. Furthermore, because obesity is now a characteristic of populations and not only of individuals, researchers, government health organizations, and advocacy groups characterize obesity as an epidemic.

Fast food culture is an emerging trend among the younger generation. Fast food restaurants are primed to maximize the speed, efficiency and conformity. The menu is kept limited and standardized essentially to minimize the waiting time so that the customers eat quickly and leave. This perspective delineates the emerging fast food culture in India, its impact on pregnant women and strategies to counter it. Fast foods are widely available through variety of outlets. Sodas, cold drinks, chips and many other foods of low nutritional value. On a typical day that fast food is eaten, pregnant women consume substantially more total energy and have worse dietary quality compared with a typical day without fast food. There are much greater side effects of fast food and people are unaware of its ill consequences. It can tend to many detrimental diseases. Prolonged use of fast food is also a cause of health problems, obesity, indigestion problem and high cholesterol. Fast food companies are targeting through great promotion strategies, delicious recipes. There are much greater side effects of fast food and people are unaware of its ill consequences. Chubbiness, increase in cholesterol levels, dietary deficiencies, cardiac disorders, loss of muscle mass, depression, sexual dysfunction, asthma, strokes, type 2 diabetes, cancer (kidney / uterine / colon / breast / esophagus), liver disease, cancer and cardiovascular diseases can all be caused by eating fast food on a regular basis. Fast foods

have high level of fat and sugars that are not only unhealthy but addictive and that creates a vicious cycle making it hard for pregnant women to choose healthy food. High content of trans fat in commercially available fast foods predispose.

Fast Food:

Fast food what we normally understand is burgers, pizzas and pastas. However, the right definition of Fast food is a food that doesn't give anything to our body and is considered 'trash' by our body. So in reality if the food you eat has all the below mentioned things then the food you are eating is Fast food.

- **High Salt Quotient:** Fast food is quite high in salt quotient as it has lots of mayonnaise and other sauces used to make it delicious and tempting. Not to forget the processed cheese that is again high in salt. Too much salt is not good during pregnancy as it can lead to water retention in the body resulting in swelling in the feet and hands. In addition, it can also lead to hypertension (high blood pressure) in pregnancy.
- **Absence of Fibre:** During pregnancy it is quite essential to have loads of fibre so that you are not constipated and junk food does not have any fibre that can result in uncomfortable bowel moments during pregnancy. Putting pressure on your bowel movement may rupture the fetal bag.
- **Sugar and Fat:** Fast food is not only high in salt content, it is also high in sugar and fat content as well. For instance the French fries are loaded with oil and salt, the pizza and pasta sauces do have some amount of sugar in them, and then donuts – a classic example of a junk food loaded with both salt and sugar and loads of fat. Again too much sugar can lead to gestational diabetes during pregnancy and may also interfere with the healthy development of the baby. It is also believed that expecting mummies with gestational diabetes give birth to overweight baby.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There have been various researches on different aspects of the initiative ranging from the health dimensions. Some of these researches retrieved through internet searches have been reviewed here:

Das, Uday Kumar Lal (2020) Effect of Fast Food on Children's Health, He find out, The high levels of sugar in junk food which puts metabolism under stress; when refined sugar is taken, the pancreas secretes high amounts of insulin to prevent a dangerous spike in blood sugar levels. Because fast food and junk food don't contain adequate amounts of protein and good carbohydrates, the blood sugar levels suddenly drops after eating, resulting with grumpy, fatigued feeling and a craving for sugar.

Kumar, D, Mittal, P.C, and Singh, (2013) Socio Cultural and Nutritional Aspects of fast food consumption among teenagers and youth, He find out, Another pathway which acetyl CoA is involved is in formation of ketone bodies, which is inactive when energy levels are high, but is active in case when impaired glucose tolerance sets in. Carbonated soft drinks, in addition to towering amount of sugar reportedly contain methylglyoxal (MG), which is strongly associated with human carbonyl stress.

Ryan, D.H, and Bray, G.A (2010) Consumption of fast food and its side effect among adults in a law college Banlore, He find out, A high sodium level has been clearly implicated as the causative factor for high blood pressure. Sodium is known to affect renin-angiotensin system in kidneys, which produces vasoconstrictive effects on arterioles, leading to development of high blood pressure. Also the salts used for the preparation has an impact of their excretion through kidneys, thus having an effect on renal system.

III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research was conducted in Madhubani, Bihar, Pregnant women are losing their fundamental food preparation qualities. This study helps to identify about specific intake of foods i.e., fast foods or home foods based on socio-demographic changes. 200 Pregnant women participated who were 22 years and older in the research usually ate at fast-food and home food. The research data were collected using the technique of interview by questionnaire forms. The questionnaire form consisted of five sections which were general information about individuals, their food preferences, were they prefer to have, with whom, how often they have and drink they take in fast food and home food. As for the anthropometric measurements of the participants, their body weight (kg) were measured and the body mass index (BMI) was calculated. Recently, the definition of the most appropriate weight is BMI (kg/m²).

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table: 1
Showing distribution of food choice among the pregnant women

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS	HOME MADE FOOD		FAST FOOD		TOTAL	
	N=124	N%	N=76	N %	N =200	N %
AGE						
22-20	74	37	51	25.5	125	62.5
30-40	32	16	19	9.5	51	41.5
40 and above	18	9	6	3	27	13.5
Marital Status						
Married	10	5	5	2.5	15	7.5
OCCUPATION STATUS						
Employee	8	4	10	5	18	9
Unemployed	116	58	66	33	182	91
EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION						
Under graduate	104	52	62	31	166	83
Post graduate	20	10	14	7	34	17

Table :2
Showing distribution of BMI among the pregnant women of different food choice

BMI	HOME MADE FOOD		FAST FOOD	
	N	%	N	%
Under Weight				
Normal Weight	35	17.5	12	6
Obese	80	40	43	21.5
X ² =11.21	9	4.5	21	10.5

Table :3
Showing distribution of food choice among different age group

AGE	HOME MADE FOOD	FAST FOOD
22-30	74	51
30-40	32	19
40 and above	18	6

As can be seen in the table, 62.5% of the respondents were in the 22-30 age group. When the table is evaluated according to the preference of food, the percentage of the homemade food in the 22-30 age group is 37.0% and that of the fast food is 25.5%. According to these results, it can be said that younger Pregnant Women of Madhubani still prefer homemade food. In Table 1, when the occupation status of the participants was examined, it was determined that 91.0% were unemployed, while 9.0% were employed. The preference of food as far as the occupation status is concerned was determined as statistically important. When the marital status of the respondents was evaluated, it was found that 7.5% were married and 85.5% were not. When the education levels of the participants who were women were examined, 83.0% of them were under graduate women and remaining 17.0% were post graduate degrees. Overweight and obesity are caused by energy imbalance have become a global epidemic, affecting about a billion people world wide. The body weights of the 200 respondents participated in this research were evaluated according to their body mass index. It has been determined that the difference between the genders as per BMI is statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). In the research which was conducted to compare the diet quality and the overweight status of homemade food and fast food over 22-30 above years, it was determined that there was a small but important positive relation between home-food consumption and being overweight.

Junk foods though are great as an appetizer but it is as harmful as eating trash. It affects a normal person very easily so you can imagine how harmful the effect will be to a pregnant lady. This even creates a harsh effect on the baby inside the womb too. When an expecting mommy eats all those sugar and salt-rich foods which are undoubtedly less nutritive value, it is absorbed by the placenta as well. Thus, interfering with the healthy development and resulting in an obese baby or a baby with health disorders including mental health disorders as well.

It is undoubtedly bad to eat junk food in general and especially during pregnancy because if you are eating junk food regularly, you are putting your and your baby's health at risk. You will gain unwanted and unhealthy weight that can pose problems during delivery, as the weight gain during pregnancy can't be lost during the pregnancy. Following are the harmful effects of eating junk food during pregnancy. Infant mortality rate in India is currently estimated at 39.1, whereas maternal mortality rate in the country is at 130. Women have to be very cautious during pregnancy as there are high risks of complications since both the mother and the baby are vulnerable. Doctors especially recommend pregnant women to eat healthy in order to keep their own and their baby's health in order. Eating junk food during pregnancy increases the risk of allergies and asthma in the baby, as eating food with excessive sugar affects the baby. Furthermore, consumption of junk food leads to excessive weight gain, which further leads to several complications such as birthing a big baby, early labor, gestational diabetes, increased risk of birth defects, miscarriage and stillborn baby.

- **Unhealthy and Unwanted Weight Gain:** The most obvious effect of eating junk foods is weight gain. Junk foods can make a person overweight and obese easily. It has a significantly higher risk of serious complications in women body during pregnancy. The consequences can be high blood pressure or Hypertension, pregnancy induced hypertension, various birth defects. Hence, to minimize the risks, obese mothers should maintain the weight gain limit. Doctors often recommend couples to plan the pregnancy after having a fit and healthy body. Especially to the mothers. It becomes too much difficulty to carry an extra weight during the last few month if someone is obese. There are many cases of miscarriage happens at the last stage of pregnancy because of the obese period.
- **Fetal Development:** You may not know that a lack of protein during pregnancy interferes with the proper kidney development in the fetus. If you are having a protein deficient diet then the kidney of the offspring remain underdeveloped. So, this process causes a massive development of high blood pressure and renal disease as the babies while reaching to adulthood. Doctors say that the adult hypertension and coronary heart disease may happen by intrauterine exposure to poor nutrition.
- **Increases the risk of premature delivery:** Eating too much of junk food that has no fibre can put unnecessary pressure on bowel movement which may lead to rupture of your water bag thus terminating the pregnancy.
- **Constipation:** Constipation is another hazard that can lead to a termination of your pregnancy, as it put unnecessary pressure on your bowel movement
- **Behaviour disorder:** If you are too much into eating junk and oily foods during pregnancy, there are chances you may behave weirdly. Doctors say that childhood obesity is inter connected with the increased risk of depression, attention deficit disorder and obviously poor learning. Many types of research say that pregnant women who eat doughnuts, chips, oily foods, candies too much, have a risk of defective child birth. Basically, the baby brain and mother's brain to react in a different manner.
- **Effect on Hormones:** Furthermore, it has also been found that consumption of junk food also leads to PCOS (Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome). Eating junk food, sugary food and an irregular schedule of eating leads to fluctuation in glucose levels and hormonal imbalance, this further leads to deposition of fat in hips and abdomen. Consumption of junk food results in increased chances of PCOS in girls. PCOS further leads to complications during pregnancy. Junk food carries hormone disrupting chemicals and pregnant women, babies and teen girls are the most vulnerable to them. Even after delivery, there are high chances of women succumbing to postpartum hemorrhage which is responsible for 17.7 of the maternal mortality rate. Babies are prone to mental disorders if their mothers follow an unhealthy diet. Mothers too experience issues like extreme lethargy, bloating after delivery and they find it difficult to lose weight they gained during pregnancy.

During pregnancy, it can be hard not to give in to those cravings for unhealthy foods especially when it comes to junk food. From fried pickles to ice cream at midnight, women have some pretty crazy food cravings during pregnancy. Blame the extreme hormonal changes that expectant women experience, which play a major role in their sense of taste and smell. So even if you were never a potato chip junkie, don't be surprised if you find yourself inhaling a canister of Pringles. Besides, there are plenty of excuses to give into those cravings, but researchers have found that those would be mothers who eat junk food during pregnancy are more likely to have pregnant women with mental health problem. From the onset of pregnancy to delivery of the baby your body undergoes tremendous constant changes, and the food expecting mothers eat plays a crucial role in the development of the foetus in the womb.

V. CONCLUSION

When an expecting mommy eats all this sugar and salt-rich foods with less nutritive value, it is absorbed by the placenta as well. Thus, interfering with the healthy development and resulting in an obese baby or a baby with health disorders including mental health disorders as well. Yes, it is bad to eat junk food in general and especially during pregnancy because if you are eating junk food regularly, you are putting your and your baby's health at risk. You will gain unwanted and unhealthy weight that can pose problems during delivery, as the weight gain during pregnancy can't be lost during the pregnancy. Food consumption patterns differed across the studied countries, with Pregnant women typically making more healthy choices. According to the results of the research, it has been determined that young Pregnant women of Madhubani, Bihar, still prefer traditional homemade food than fast food. Health is important than taste so by increasing in eating homemade food give insurance to our health as by fast food consumption calories . When the choices of western style and traditional fast-food are assessed separately, for young pregnant women, it has been found that the most preferred homemade food style is rice with potato . Accordingly, this study is subject to data availability. It is well recognized that lifestyles have strong influences on individual homemade food consumption patterns.

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