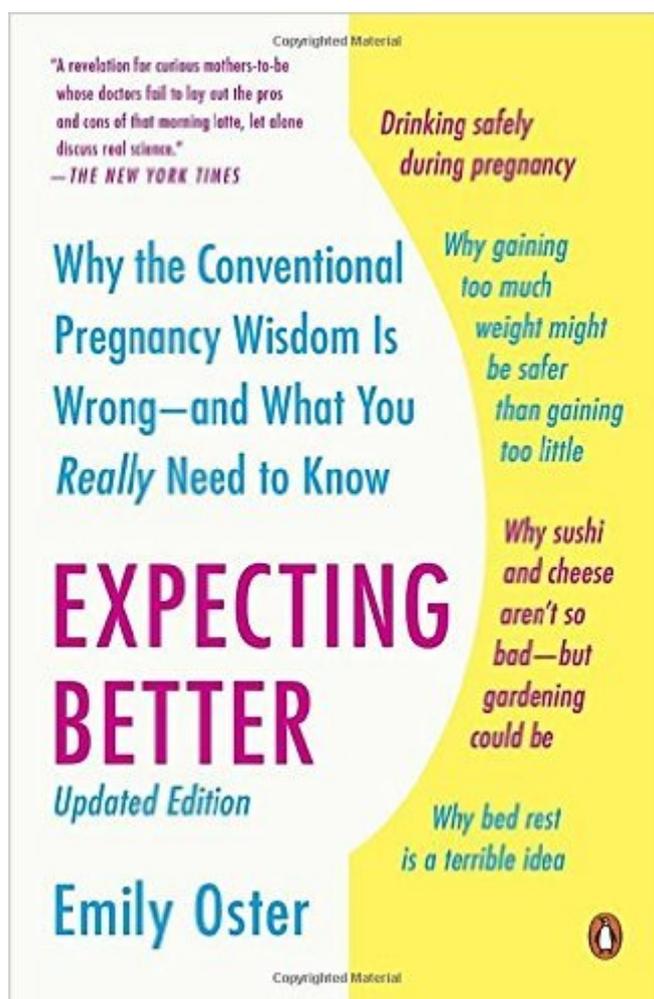


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# Expecting Better: Why The Conventional Pregnancy Wisdom Is Wrong--and What You Really Need To Know



## Synopsis

\*Newly Updated, this Revised Edition Includes the Latest Research and Findings on Genetic Testing and more\*  
"Gives moms-to-be a big helping of peace of mind!"  
"Harvey Karp M.D., bestselling author of *The Happiest Baby on the Block Pregnancy* "unquestionably one of the most profound, meaningful experiences of adulthood" can reduce otherwise intelligent women to, well, babies.  
Pregnant women are told to avoid cold cuts, sushi, alcohol, and coffee without ever being told why these are forbidden. Rules for prenatal testing are similarly unexplained. Moms-to-be desperately want a resource that empowers them to make their own right choices. When award-winning economist Emily Oster was a mom-to-be herself, she evaluated the data behind the accepted rules of pregnancy, and discovered that most are often misguided and some are just flat-out wrong. Debunking myths and explaining everything from the real effects of caffeine to the surprising dangers of gardening, *Expecting Better* is the book for every pregnant woman who wants to enjoy a healthy and relaxed pregnancy "and the occasional glass of wine.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

If you asked me a couple of weeks ago if I was interested in reading *Yet Another Pregnancy Book*, I would have laughed. Hardly! I read a couple early on, then turned to the almighty Google when I had questions or curiosities. Then about a week ago, my mom clipped an excerpt from the *Wall Street Journal* called "Take Back Your Pregnancy." Well, I took the bait. Emily Oster's article intrigued me. Definitely one for any subsequent pregnancy, I thought! Then the furor struck on the Interwebs. Because Oster draws the conclusion from a variety of studies and data that it's fine to

indulge in the occasional alcoholic beverage during pregnancy, she has been excoriated in a variety of articles and in the responding comments. Current .com reviews are skewed by those who take issue with an economist (not a medical doctor) who will, in their minds, increase the number of children born with FASD (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder). Several comments made nasty remarks about the author's 2-year-old daughter, Penelope, implying that it was only a matter of time before she would begin to fail IQ tests and demonstrate signs of FASD herself. Was Oster truly that horrible and conniving? Did she write her book to cause birth defects and emotional trauma? I had to know the truth, and while 40 weeks and two days pregnant, I picked up *Expecting Better* and read it carefully. Spoiler alert: it's really not that bad. I love authors who examine evidence, explain scientific studies and methodology, and draw logical conclusions about the data. Oster isn't an ob/gyn, but she's a well-trained economist whose job is interpreting data. Her analysis is thorough even as she keeps her writing accessible, humorous, and sympathetic.

My husband showed me an article on Emily Oster's book (published in the *Wall Street Journal*, August 9th) and once I read it, I could not wait to read her book. I am 12 weeks pregnant and could not understand the lack of data supporting all of the rules that pregnant women must adhere to. I saw 2 OB-GYN's and both doctors provided differing views, without providing sound data... was it just their opinion they were spouting off to me? That's what it seemed like to me. Women must make their own decisions, at the end of the day, and I am shocked with the negative reviews this book is receiving. This book is a **MUST READ FOR ALL WOMEN!!** The negativity is around drinking --- Emily Oster is **NOT** supporting drinking while being pregnant. This book provides multiple studies on women who drink and shows us that if you have a drink or two, you are **NOT HURTING YOUR BABY**. But if you don't agree with this philosophy, then don't drink and mind your own business! There are plenty of women around the world who drink while carrying a child. I highly doubt that the reviewers who are so concerned with FAS have actually read the book!!! I loved the chapter on miscarrying since there is so much random information online. I too, like Emily's friend in the book, wondered the % of miscarrying at varying weeks. It is comforting to know that there are many reasons why women miscarry and you can't make a generalization as to your chances of miscarrying. Another chapter I appreciated was foods you really should avoid. Even though I'm pregnant, I don't want to feel like I can't live and enjoy food! Knowing the foods I must avoid brings me a peace of mind. In addition, I always wondered about listeria and did not believe it would be harmful to me or my baby.

The highly emotional reviews railing against Ms. Oster's book are exactly why this book was necessary. Too often, we rely on unbridled emotion to make really big decisions, when in reality our emotion needs to be tempered by factual data (so that we are not scared into doing something that may, in fact, be MORE dangerous). For what it's worth, I am incredibly conservative on the topic of alcohol. I myself do not drink. I am aware of and take seriously the damage alcohol can do to people. That being said, I hope that I NEVER, EVER come across as expounding the belief that alcohol is bad, hands down. While I certainly would not choose to drink during my pregnancy (for the reason that I live a sober life), I absolutely do NOT condemn those who choose to do so. I have a great appreciation for the numbers, and the numbers have clearly shown that small amounts in the 2nd and 3rd tri are unlikely to have any impact on the developing fetus. There is no arguing with that. It is fact, and it is public. Nowhere in Ms. Oster's book does she encourage ANYONE to drink. All Ms. Oster has done is collect the information that was already publicly available, and make it palatable for the average person. With all due respect to those representing NOFAS in the reviews here, this book is not going to change anything. People who are alcoholics and drink excessively during pregnancy have a problem that has probably never been influenced by medical data, not even when it was still believed by researchers that any amount of alcohol was hazardous to a developing fetus. As someone who has had to make very difficult decisions in my pregnancy, I have greatly appreciated having this book---a beacon of sanity in a period that is fraught with fear-mongering and false information.

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