

Taking Medication During Pregnancy

While some medications are considered safe to take during pregnancy, the effects of other medications on your unborn baby are unknown. Therefore, it is very important to pay special attention to medications you take while you are pregnant, especially during the [first trimester](#), a crucial time of development for your baby.



If you were taking prescription medications before you became pregnant, please ask the physician about the safety of continuing these medications as soon as you find out that you are pregnant. The physician will weigh the benefit to you and the risk to your baby when making her recommendation about a particular medication. With some medications, the risk of *not* taking them may be more serious than the potential risk associated with taking them.

If you are prescribed any new medication, please inform your health care provider that you are pregnant. Be sure to discuss the risks and benefits of the newly prescribed medication with the physician before taking the medication.

What Medications Are Safe to Take During Pregnancy?

[Prenatal vitamins](#), now available without a prescription, are safe to take during pregnancy. Please call the office about the safety of taking other vitamins, herbal remedies and supplements during pregnancy. Most herbal preparations and supplements have not been proven to be safe during pregnancy.

Generally, you should not take any over-the-counter medication unless it is necessary.

The following medications and home remedies have no known harmful effects during pregnancy when taken according to the package directions. If you want to know about the safety of any other medications not listed here, please contact your health care provider.



Condition	Safe Medications to Take During Pregnancy*
Allergy	Benadryl
Cold and Flu	<p>Tylenol (acetaminophen) or Tylenol Cold Warm salt/water gargle Saline nasal drops or spray</p> <p>Sudafed, Actifed, Dristan, Neosynephrine*</p> <p>Robitussin DM, Trind-DM, Vicks Cough Syrup, Romilar, Halls*</p> <p>*Do not take "SA" (sustained action) forms of these drugs or the "Multi-Symptom" forms of these drugs.</p>
Constipation	<p>Metamucil Citrucil Fiberall/Fibercon Colace Milk of Magnesia Senekot</p>
Diarrhea	<p><i>For 24 hours, only after 12 weeks of pregnancy:</i> Kaopectate Immodium</p> <p>Parepectolin</p>
First Aid Ointment	<p>J & J</p> <p>Bacitracin</p> <p>Neosporin</p>
Headache	Tylenol (acetaminophen)
Heartburn	<p>Maalox Mylanta Tums Riopan Titralac Gaviscon</p>

Condition	Safe Medications To Take During Pregnancy*
Hemorrhoids	Preparation H Anusol Tucks Witch hazel
Nausea and Vomiting	Vitamin B6 100 mg tablet Emetrol (if not diabetic) Emetrex Sea bands
Rashes	Hydrocortisone cream or ointment Caladryl lotion or cream Benadryl cream Oatmeal bath (Aveeno)
Yeast Infection	Monistat or Terazol <i>Do not insert applicator too far</i>

***Please Note: No drug can be considered 100% safe to use during pregnancy.**

Can I Take Alternative Therapies During Pregnancy?

Many pregnant women believe "natural" products can be safely used to relieve nausea, backache, and other annoying symptoms of pregnancy, but many of these so called natural products have not been tested for their safety and effectiveness in non pregnant women, much less in pregnant women. Therefore, it is very important to check with the physician before taking any alternative therapies. She will not recommend a product or therapy until it is shown to be safe and effective.



What Alternative Therapies Are Considered Safe During Pregnancy?

There are some alternative therapies that have been shown to be safe and effective for pregnant women to take to relieve some of the uncomfortable side effects of pregnancy.

- **Nausea in early pregnancy:** acupuncture, acupressure, ginger root (250 mg capsules 4

times a day), and vitamin B6 (pyridoxine, 25 mg two or three times a day) work well.

- **Backache:** chiropractic manipulation holds the best track record.
- **Turning a breech baby:** exercise, hypnosis, and traditional Chinese treatment (burning incense-like substance on the fifth toe) have proven beneficial.
- **Pain relief in labor:** epidurals are most effective, but injections of sterile water near a woman's tailbone works surprisingly well, as do immersion in a warm bath, and a high tech nerve stimulator called TENS. Relaxation techniques, patterned breathing, emotional support, and self-hypnosis are already widely used alternative therapies in labor.

What Alternative Therapies Should Be Avoided?

The following substances have the potential to harm a developing baby when used in a concentrated formulation (not as a spice in cooking). Some are thought to cause birth defects, and encourage early labor.

- **Avoid these oral supplements:** Arbor vitae, Beth root, Black cohosh, Blue cohosh, Cascara, Chaste tree berry, Chinese angelica (Dong Quai), Cinchona, Cotton root bark, Feverfew, Ginseng, Golden seal, Juniper, Kava kava, Licorice, Meadow saffron, Pennyroyal, Poke root, Rue, Sage, St. John's wort, Senna, Tansy, White peony, Wormwood, Yarrow, Yellow dock, vitamin A (large doses can cause birth defects).
- **Avoid these aromatherapy essential oils:** calamus, mugwort, pennyroyal, sage, wintergreen, basil, hyssop, myrrh, marjoram, and thyme.



If you have any doubt regarding the safety of a medication, both traditional and alternative, contact the physician *before* taking the therapy. For additional health information, please contact our office at (732) 308-2255.