

Some medicines for epilepsy, mental health, and pain can harm your unborn baby

Talk to your doctor about the risks to you and your baby, and how to balance them



Anti-seizure medicines taken during pregnancy can harm an unborn baby. These medicines are commonly prescribed for epilepsy, some mental health problems, and chronic pain. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure about the type of medicine you are taking.

Published: May 2020
Review date: May 2022
Review managed by:
Treatment Safety team, ACC

ACC8158 May 2020

This information is intended to provide guidelines and general advice to healthcare professionals, but should not be used as a substitute for assessment with the circumstances that are relevant to the individual patient.



If you could be pregnant, get in touch with your doctor urgently

**Keep taking your
medicines until you've
talked to your doctor**

**Use two kinds of
contraception unless
you plan to get pregnant**

Make an appointment with your doctor if you could get pregnant or are planning a pregnancy, and you're taking any of these medicines

Find out more at www.facsnz.com

What to ask your doctor

- What should I do if I want to get pregnant – can I cut down, stop, or change my medicine?
 - What else should I do to reduce the risks to me and my baby?
 - Who will coordinate my medical care through my pregnancy?
 - What specialist care am I entitled to while pregnant?
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Taking these medicines has both benefits and risks

These medicines help many people stay well and live well, and most people who take them when they're pregnant will have a healthy baby.

Risks to an unborn baby

- Higher risk of a baby with spina bifida, cleft palate, and heart defects.
- Higher risk of a child with learning difficulties or autism.

Risks if you stop taking your medicines

- If you have epilepsy, serious seizures could put you and your baby at risk.
- If you have bipolar disorder, your symptoms could come back, and you could get very ill once the baby's born.