

# Amoxicillin and Clavulanic Acid

---

This sheet is about exposure to amoxicillin and clavulanic acid in pregnancy and while breastfeeding. This information is based on available published literature. It should not take the place of medical care and advice from your healthcare provider.

## ***What are amoxicillin and clavulanic acid?***

Amoxicillin is a penicillin-like antibiotic. Clavulanic acid is a medication that helps amoxicillin work better. These two medications are combined to make an antibiotic that has been used to treat infections caused by bacteria. Some brand names include Amoclav®, Augmentin XR® and Clavamox®.

Sometimes when women find out they are pregnant, they think about changing how they take their medication, or stopping their medication altogether. However, it is important to talk with your healthcare providers before making any changes to how you take your medication. Your healthcare providers can talk with you about the benefits of treating your condition and the risks of untreated illness during pregnancy.

## ***I take amoxicillin and clavulanic acid. Can it make it harder for me to get pregnant?***

It is not known if taking amoxicillin and clavulanic acid can make it harder to get pregnant.

## ***Does taking amoxicillin and clavulanic acid increase the chance of miscarriage?***

Miscarriage is common and can occur in any pregnancy for many different reasons. Studies have not been done to see if taking amoxicillin and clavulanic acid can increase the chance of miscarriage.

## ***Does taking amoxicillin and clavulanic acid increase the chance of birth defects?***

Every pregnancy starts out with a 3-5% chance of having a birth defect. This is called the background risk. Most studies have not found an increased chance of birth defects when amoxicillin and clavulanic acid are taken during the first trimester. However, there are very few studies available about this combination medication. There are more studies looking at the use of amoxicillin only during pregnancy. A few of these studies have shown a higher chance of cleft lip and/or cleft palate (an opening in the upper lip and/or the roof of the mouth that needs surgery to correct) when amoxicillin is taken during the first trimester. Other studies on amoxicillin use have not found a higher chance of cleft lip and/or palate. Overall, the chance of cleft lip and/or palate is expected to be low if a woman takes amoxicillin and clavulanic acid in the first trimester of pregnancy.

## ***Does taking amoxicillin and clavulanic acid in pregnancy increase the chance of other pregnancy-related problems?***

Taking amoxicillin and clavulanic acid is not expected to increase the chance of pregnancy-related problems such as preterm delivery (birth before week 37) or low birth weight (weighing less than 5 pounds, 8 ounces [2500 grams] at birth).

Studies have looked at pregnancy outcomes in women treated with antibiotics to help prevent infection following preterm premature rupture of membranes (PPROM). PPRM is when the fluid-filled sac surrounding the fetus breaks open before 37 weeks of pregnancy. Some studies have suggested that using amoxicillin with clavulanic acid following PPRM increases the chance of a serious bacterial infection known as necrotizing enterocolitis (NEC) in the newborn. NEC is a condition that can injure a baby's intestines. Although the chance of NEC in the newborn is likely to be low with the use of amoxicillin with clavulanic acid following PPRM, other antibiotics might be preferred in these cases, if needed.

## ***Does taking amoxicillin and clavulanic acid in pregnancy affect future behavior or learning for the child?***

A study that followed hundreds of children up to age 11 years did not find that using amoxicillin and clavulanic acid in pregnancy causes learning or behavior problems in the child.

## ***Breastfeeding while taking amoxicillin and clavulanic acid:***

Amoxicillin and clavulanic acid enter the breast milk in small amounts. These small amounts are not expected to cause side effects for most nursing infants. In a study of 67 breastfeeding infants, there were no serious side effects from this medication in the breast milk. Some babies had rash, diarrhea, irritability, or constipation, but these reactions did not last long. If you suspect the baby has any symptoms (such as rash or diarrhea), contact the child's healthcare provider. Be sure to talk to your healthcare provider about all your breastfeeding questions.

***If a man takes amoxicillin and clavulanic acid, could it affect fertility or increase the chance of birth defects?***

Studies have not been done to see if amoxicillin and clavulanic acid could affect male fertility (ability to get a woman pregnant) or increase the chance of birth defects above the background risk. In general, exposures that men have are unlikely to increase risks to a pregnancy. For more information, please see the MotherToBaby fact sheet Paternal Exposures at <https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/paternal-exposures-pregnancy/>.

**Please click here for references.**

**Questions? Call 866.626.6847 | Text 855.999.3525 | Email or Chat at [MotherToBaby.org](https://mothertobaby.org).**

---

Disclaimer: MotherToBaby Fact Sheets are meant for general information purposes and should not replace the advice of your health care provider. MotherToBaby is a service of the non-profit Organization of Teratology Information Specialists (OTIS). Copyright by OTIS, March 1, 2024.