

# Amoxicillin and Clavulanic Acid

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

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

These 2 medications are combined to make an antibiotic that is used to treat bacterial infections. Amoxicillin is a penicillin-like antibiotic and clavulanic acid is a drug that increases the effectiveness of amoxicillin. Some brand names include Amoclav®, Augmentin XR® and Clavamox®.

Sometimes when people 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 this 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?***

Studies have not been done to know if taking amoxicillin and clavulanic acid can make it harder to get pregnant.

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

Miscarriage can occur in any pregnancy. Studies have not been done to see if amoxicillin and clavulanic acid increases the chance for 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 for birth defects when amoxicillin and clavulanic acid is taken during the first trimester; however, there are very few studies available. There are more studies looking at the use of amoxicillin alone during pregnancy. A few studies have shown a higher chance of cleft lip (lip doesn't form correctly) with or without cleft palate (opening in the roof of the mouth) when amoxicillin is taken during the first trimester. However, there are other studies that have not found a higher chance for cleft lip with or without cleft palate. Based on the current information, the overall chance of a cleft in lip and/or palate is considered to be low if a person is taking amoxicillin and clavulanic acid in a pregnancy.

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

There is limited information regarding the use of amoxicillin and clavulanic acid during the second trimester, but studies so far do not report an increased chance for pregnancy problems such as preterm delivery (birth before week 37) or low birth weight (weighing less than 5 pounds, 8 ounces [2500 grams] at birth) when used in this time period.

For use in the third trimester, there is one large study that found an increased chance for preterm labor, a condition in which the early stages of childbirth start before 37 weeks of pregnancy. The people treated with amoxicillin and clavulanic acid were found to have a small increased chance for a serious bacterial infection known as necrotizing enterocolitis (NEC) in their newborns. This is a condition that can injure a baby's intestines. Further review has found some studies that confirm this chance and others that do not. Overall, the chance that the use of amoxicillin and clavulanic acid increases the risk of NEC is likely to be low.

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

One study that has followed hundreds of children up to age 11 years did not find that prenatal exposure to amoxicillin and clavulanic acid was linked to learning or behavior problems.

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

Amoxicillin and clavulanic acid enter the breast milk, however, based on a small number of studies; it has not been shown to greatly increase the chance side effects for a nursing baby. A study of 67 infants who were breastfeeding did

not find a high chance of serious side effects. While some babies had side effects such as rash, diarrhea, irritability and constipation, the reactions did not last long. Infants that are born preterm or are younger than one month of age have a stomach and intestine that are less mature than older babies. This might allow more medication to enter their blood stream. If you think your baby has developed a side effect from medication that might be in your milk, talk to your child's healthcare provider. Be sure to talk to your healthcare provider about all of your breastfeeding questions.

***If a male takes amoxicillin and clavulanic acid, could it affect fertility (ability to get partner pregnant) or increase the chance of birth defects?***

Studies have not been done to see if amoxicillin and clavulanic acid could affect male fertility or increase the chance of birth defects. In general, exposures that fathers or sperm donors have are unlikely to increase the 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).**

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