

Aripiprazole (Abilify®)

This sheet is about exposure to aripiprazole 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 is aripiprazole?

Aripiprazole is medication that has been used to treat schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, autism spectrum disorders, and depression. Some brand names for aripiprazole include Abilify®, Abilify Discmelt®, Aristada®, and Abilify Maintena®.

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.

For more information on depression, see our fact sheet at <https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/depression-pregnancy/>.

I take aripiprazole. Can it make it harder for me to get pregnant?

Studies have not been done to see if taking aripiprazole could make it harder to get pregnant.

Does taking aripiprazole increase the chance of miscarriage?

Miscarriage is common and can occur in any pregnancy for many different reasons. It is not known if aripiprazole increases the chance of miscarriage. One study looking at the use of aripiprazole in pregnancy reported an increased chance of miscarriage, but other studies have not reported this finding. However, some studies have reported a higher chance of miscarriage when depression is left untreated in pregnancy. As there can be many causes of miscarriage, it is hard to know if a medication, the condition being treated, or other factors are the cause of a miscarriage.

Does taking aripiprazole 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. Information on the use of aripiprazole in pregnancy is limited. Three small studies and one large study did not show an increased chance of birth defects when aripiprazole was taken during pregnancy.

Does taking aripiprazole in pregnancy increase the chance of other pregnancy-related problems?

It is not known if aripiprazole can cause other 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). There are studies that reported a slightly increased chance of preterm birth and babies who were born smaller than expected. In these studies, aripiprazole was taken for a short time. However, the underlying illness being treated might also increase the chance of these pregnancy complications.

I need to take aripiprazole throughout my entire pregnancy. Will it cause withdrawal symptoms in my baby after birth?

There have been reports of babies exposed to aripiprazole during late pregnancy who had symptoms soon after birth. These symptoms are sometimes referred to as withdrawal and can include jitteriness, breathing problems, shaking, sleepiness, eating problems, rigid muscles, or low muscle tone. Information on this is limited, and it is not known if the chance of this happening is high or low. In some babies the symptoms can go away quickly, while other babies might need treatment in the hospital. Not all babies exposed to aripiprazole will have these symptoms. It is important that your healthcare providers know you are taking aripiprazole so that if symptoms occur your baby can get the care that is best for them.

Does taking aripiprazole in pregnancy affect future behavior or learning for the child?

It is not known if aripiprazole increases the chance of behavior or learning issues for the child. However, the underlying illness being treated might also affect a child's behavior or development.

Breastfeeding while taking aripiprazole:

A limited number of studies have shown that when a woman who is breastfeeding takes up to 15mg of aripiprazole a day, the medication passes into breastmilk in small amounts. While there have been cases of babies becoming sleepier than usual, most breastfed babies exposed to aripiprazole have no reported symptoms. If you suspect the baby has any symptoms, (such as being too sleepy or having trouble eating), contact the child's healthcare provider right away.

Aripiprazole may lower the amount of milk your body makes. Be sure to talk to your healthcare provider about all your breastfeeding questions.

If a man takes aripiprazole, could it affect fertility or increase the chance of birth defects?

Studies have not been done to see if aripiprazole could affect a man's 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/>.

National Pregnancy Registry for Psychiatric Medications:

There is a pregnancy registry for women who take psychiatric medications, such as aripiprazole. For more information you can look at their website: <https://womensmentalhealth.org/research/pregnancyregistry/>.

Please click here for references.

Questions? Call 866.626.6847 | Text 855.999.3525 | Email or Chat at MotherToBaby.org.

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