Baclofen

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

What is baclofen?
Baclofen is a muscle relaxant and antispasmodic medication. It helps muscles connected to the skeleton relax. Baclofen is used to treat spastic movement disorders or rigid muscles caused by conditions like multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, and spinal cord or brain injuries. Baclofen can also be used to treat certain cases of hiccups, autism, and alcohol use disorder. It can be taken by mouth or given directly to the spinal cord through a pump (intrathecal pump). Also, as cream, baclofen can be applied directly to the skin (topically). Sometimes it is combined with other prescription medications (amitriptyline, ketamine, ketoptofen) that are applied to skin and other tissues to treat pain. Some brand names for baclofen are Lioresal®, Kemstro®, and Gablofen®. Topically applied baclofen is sold by the name EnorvaRX-Baclofen®.

I take baclofen. Can it make it harder for me to get pregnant?
Studies have not yet been done to see if baclofen could make it harder to get pregnant.

I just found out I am pregnant. Should I stop taking baclofen?
Talk with your healthcare providers before making any changes to how you take your medication. The benefits of taking your medication may outweigh the risks of untreated illness. Suddenly stopping baclofen can cause serious withdrawal symptoms including seizures, hallucinations, confusion, delusions, disorientation, general agitation, insomnia, dizziness, nausea, and personality changes. It is not known if or how withdrawal symptoms may affect a pregnancy.

Does taking baclofen during my pregnancy increase the chance of miscarriage?
Miscarriage can occur in any pregnancy. Studies have not yet been done to see if baclofen can increase the chance of miscarriage.

Does taking baclofen increase the chance of having a baby with a birth defect?
Every pregnancy starts out with a 3-5% chance of having a birth defect. This is called the background risk. Experimental studies in animals raised concern that baclofen could increase the chance for birth defects. But, the animals were given doses of baclofen that were much higher than what a person would take. There is no evidence that taking baclofen during pregnancy increases the chance of having a baby with birth defects above the background risk. There are also several case reports of children that were exposed to baclofen during pregnancy and did not have birth defects. More information is needed in order to know if baclofen can increase the chance for birth defects.

Could taking baclofen cause other pregnancy complications?
It is not known if taking baclofen can cause other pregnancy complications.

I need to take baclofen throughout my entire pregnancy. Will it cause withdrawal symptoms in my baby after birth?
Withdrawal symptoms have been reported in babies whose mothers had taken baclofen by mouth (orally) throughout pregnancy. The withdrawal symptoms may include seizures, tremors, rigidity, drowsiness, dilated pupils, dry mouth, and problems feeding. Short-term treatment with baclofen in newborns who were exposed to baclofen up to delivery has been used to manage or prevent withdrawal symptoms.

No withdrawal symptoms have been reported in babies whose mothers were treated with baclofen by intrathecal pump.

Does taking baclofen in pregnancy cause long-term problems in behavior or learning for the baby?
Studies on long-term development of children exposed to baclofen during pregnancy have not yet been done.

**Can I breastfeed while taking baclofen?**

There is limited information about the use of baclofen during breastfeeding. One study found that very low amounts of baclofen enter the breastmilk when baclofen is taken by mouth. When baclofen is taken via intrathecal pump, another study found even less enters the breastmilk. No harmful effects in nursing infants have been reported.

If you suspect that the baby has any symptoms that could be related to your baclofen use, such as drowsiness, dry mouth, tremor, rigidity and dilated pupils, contact the child’s healthcare provider. Be sure to talk to your healthcare provider about all of your breastfeeding questions.

**I take baclofen. Can it make it harder for me to get my partner pregnant or increase the chance of birth defects?**

There are no studies looking male fertility and the use of baclofen. In general, exposures that fathers and sperm donor 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/](https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/paternal-exposures-pregnancy/).

Please click here for references.