Carisoprodol

This sheet is about exposure to carisoprodol in pregnancy and while breastfeeding. This information is based on published research studies. It should not take the place of medical care and advice from your healthcare providers.

What is carisoprodol?

Carisoprodol is a medication that has been used to treat muscle pain and stiffness from muscle spasms. Two brand names are Soma® and Vanadom®.

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 carisoprodol. Can it make it harder for me to get pregnant?

It is not known if carisoprodol can make it harder to get pregnant. In experimental animal studies, carisoprodol in doses that were harmful to the animals did not affect the animals' ability to get pregnant or affect fertility cycles.

Does taking carisoprodol increase the chance for miscarriage?

Miscarriage is common and can occur in any pregnancy for many different reasons. Studies have not been done in humans to see if carisoprodol increases the chance of miscarriage. In experimental animal studies, carisoprodol in doses that were harmful to the animals also reduced the number of live animal births. At lower levels, these effects were not seen. As animals do not always react to medications in the same way, especially when given higher doses compared to humans, it is hard to know if these results could apply to humans.

Does taking carisoprodol increase the chance of birth defects?

Birth defects can happen in any pregnancy for different reasons. Out of all babies born each year, about 3 out of 100 (3%) will have a birth defect. We look at research studies to try to understand if an exposure, like carisoprodol, might increase the chance of birth defects in a pregnancy.

It is not known if carisoprodol could increase the chance of birth defects. Experimental animal studies did not find a higher chance of birth defects. Studies have not been done in humans to see if carisoprodol could increase the chance of birth defects. Limited case reports of carisoprodol use in humans have not reported an increased chance or pattern of birth defects. Case reports are not the same as studies and cannot provide enough information to learn how carisoprodol would affect a human pregnancy.

According to the medication label, research studies looking at meprobamate (the medication that carisoprodol breaks down into in the body) exposure during pregnancy did not find an increased chance of birth defects.

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

Studies have not been done in humans to see if carisoprodol can increase the chance for 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 have been some case reports of normal human pregnancy outcomes after exposure to carisoprodol. These case reports do not mention if they looked at preterm delivery, low birth weight, or other pregnancy-related problems. Case reports are not the same as studies and cannot provide enough information to learn how carisoprodol would affect a human pregnancy.

In experimental animal studies, carisoprodol in doses that were harmful to the animals was also associated with decreases in fetal weight, weight gain after birth, and litter survival. As animals do not always react to medications in the same way, especially when given higher doses compared to humans, it is hard to know if these results could apply to humans.

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

Studies have not been done to see if carisoprodol can increase the chance for behavior or learning issues for the child. According to the medication label, research studies looking at meprobamate (the medication that carisoprodol breaks down into in the body) exposure during pregnancy did not find changes in IQ scores, motor development, or cognitive development of the infants.

Breastfeeding while taking carisoprodol:

Carisoprodol has not been well studied for use during breastfeeding. Carisoprodol gets into breast milk in small amounts. There are limited case reports of women using carisoprodol while breastfeeding. One report described the breastfed infant as being a little sleepier than expected while nursing. In other cases, there were no reported side effects in breastfed children. If you suspect your baby has any symptoms, such as being too sleepy or difficult waking up for feedings, contact your child's healthcare provider. Be sure to talk to your healthcare provider about all your breastfeeding questions.

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

Studies have not been done to see if carisoprodol could affect male fertility (ability to make healthy sperm) or increase the chance of birth defects. An experimental animal study did not find carisoprodol to affect male fertility. In general, men's exposures are less likely to increase risks to a pregnancy. For more general information, please see the MotherToBaby fact sheet Paternal Exposures at https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/paternal-exposures-pregnancy/.

Please click here for references.

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