Carvedilol (Coreg®)

This sheet is about exposure to carvedilol 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 provider.

What is carvedilol?

Carvedilol is a medication that has been used to treat high blood pressure (hypertension) and heart failure. It helps your heart pump blood better and lowers blood pressure. Carvedilol is sold under the brand names Coreg® and Coreg CR®.

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.

During pregnancy, the heart works harder because the heart rate and blood volume increase. For women with heart conditions or high blood pressure, these changes may worsen symptoms and increase the risk of complications such as miscarriage, stillbirth, placental abruption, preterm birth (before 37 weeks), fetal growth restriction, and preeclampsia. Preeclampsia can lead to seizures (eclampsia) and other serious health problems. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) recommends treatment when the top blood pressure number (systolic) is 160 mm Hg or higher, the bottom number (diastolic) is 110 mm Hg or higher, or both. Regular prenatal care and blood pressure management are important before, during, and after pregnancy.

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

Studies have not been done to see if taking carvedilol can make it harder to get pregnant.

In experimental animal studies, there were no effects on fertility (ability to get pregnant) when animals were given 10 times more carvedilol than would be given to humans.

Does taking carvedilol increase the chance of miscarriage?

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

In experimental animal studies, there was an increased chance of miscarriage when animals were given 25-50 times more carvedilol than would be given to humans. Since the medication was given to animals in such high amounts, it was not given to treat a medical condition, and because animals can react differently than humans do, we cannot draw conclusions on the use of carvedilol in animals and the chance of miscarriage in humans.

Does taking carvedilol 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 carvedilol, might increase the chance of birth defects in a pregnancy.

It is not known if carvedilol can increase the chance of birth defects. In one study, filling a prescription for beta-blockers (the class of medications carvedilol belongs to) was not associated with an increased chance of birth defects. Studies based on filled prescriptions cannot tell if a person took the medication.

In three other studies, taking beta-blockers (including carvedilol) during pregnancy was associated with an increased chance of heart defects. However, some of these studies did not consider other factors that could influence the chance of heart defects, including the underlying health condition being treated or a family history of heart defects.

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

It is not known if carvedilol can increase the chance of 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).

In one study, there was no difference in the growth of fetuses exposed to beta-blockers (including carvedilol) compared to those not exposed to beta-blockers. Two studies have reported an increased chance of hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) in infants exposed to beta blockers during pregnancy. However, there were limitations to the methods used in these studies, which made it hard to draw conclusions based on the results.

The product label for carvedilol states that women with hypertension that are treated with beta-blockers might have a higher chance of having a child born with hypotension (low blood pressure), bradycardia (slower heart rate), hypoglycemia, and problems breathing. Not all babies exposed to carvedilol will have these symptoms. Your healthcare providers can talk with you about using carvedilol and what treatment is best for you. It is important that your healthcare providers know you are taking carvedilol so that if symptoms occur, your baby can get the care that is best for them.

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

Studies have not been done to see if carvedilol can increase the chance of behavior or learning issues for the child.

What screenings or tests are available to see if my pregnancy has birth defects or other issues?

Prenatal ultrasounds can be used to screen for some birth defects, such as heart defects. Ultrasound can also be used to watch the growth of the pregnancy. Talk with your healthcare provider about any prenatal screenings or testing that are available to you. There are no tests available during pregnancy that can tell how much effect there could be on future behavior or learning.

Breastfeeding while taking carvedilol:

Information on the use of carvedilol in breastfeeding is limited. It is expected to pass into breast milk in small amounts. In a study looking at other beta-blockers (not including carvedilol) during breastfeeding, no increased chance of side effects was reported. If you suspect the baby has any symptoms (such as irritability, low energy levels, or being too sleepy), contact your child's healthcare provider. Be sure to talk to your healthcare provider about all your breastfeeding questions.

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

Studies have not been done to see if carvedilol could affect men's fertility (ability to make healthy sperm) or increase the chance of birth defects. 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.

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