Ciprofloxacin

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

What is ciprofloxacin?
Ciprofloxacin is an antibiotic used to treat a variety of bacterial infections. It is part of a group of antibiotics called quinolones or fluoroquinolones.

I just found out I am pregnant. Should I stop taking ciprofloxacin?
Talk with your healthcare providers before making any changes to your medication(s).

Does taking ciprofloxacin increase the chance for miscarriage?
Miscarriage can occur in any pregnancy. Ciprofloxacin is unlikely to increase the chance for miscarriage when taken in the recommended doses.

Does taking ciprofloxacin increase the chance of birth defects?
In every pregnancy, a woman starts out with a 3-5% chance of having a baby with a birth defect. This is called her background risk.

Most studies did not find an increased chance for birth defects when women took ciprofloxacin or other quinolone antibiotics during the first trimester of pregnancy. Because these studies included women taking ciprofloxacin for only five to seven days, the effects of long-term use are not well known. However, there was no increased chance for birth defects reported in a small number of babies exposed to longer periods of use.

Could taking ciprofloxacin cause other pregnancy complications?
There does not seem to be an increased chance for harmful effects on the baby if ciprofloxacin is taken later in pregnancy. While not likely to affect a pregnancy, ciprofloxacin has been associated with joint pain and, rarely, tendon rupture in the person taking the medication. Any joint pain due to ciprofloxacin typically goes away after stopping the medication. Tendon rupture is a rare complication that has mostly been reported in patients who are over 50 years of age, and has not been reported in infants after prenatal exposure.

Can I breastfeed while taking ciprofloxacin?
There are a small number of studies on using ciprofloxacin while breastfeeding. Information has been reported for 11 mothers taking ciprofloxacin, which suggests that a nursing infant would get only a small amount of the medication from the breast milk. This amount would be much lower than the dose given directly to an infant when needed for a treatment. When a woman takes ciprofloxacin while breastfeeding, the baby should be watched for symptoms such as diarrhea and yeast infection (thrush or diaper rash). Be sure to talk to your healthcare provider about your breastfeeding questions.

If a man takes ciprofloxacin, could it affect his fertility (ability to get partner pregnant) or increase the chance of birth defects?
There are no studies looking at possible risks to a pregnancy when the father takes ciprofloxacin. In general, exposures that fathers 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/pdf/.

Please click here for references.