

Clopidogrel (Plavix®)

This sheet is about exposure to clopidogrel 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 clopidogrel?

Clopidogrel is an antiplatelet medication that helps prevent blood clots. It has been used to help prevent heart attacks and strokes. A brand name for clopidogrel is Plavix®.

Sometimes when people 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 clopidogrel. Can it make it harder for me to get pregnant?

Studies have not been done in humans to see if clopidogrel can make it harder to get pregnant. In animal studies, clopidogrel did not affect fertility (ability to get pregnant).

Does taking clopidogrel 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 clopidogrel increases the chance of miscarriage. In animal studies, there was no reported increase in miscarriages.

Does taking clopidogrel 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 clopidogrel in pregnancy is limited. In animal studies, clopidogrel did not increase the chance of birth defects. In 17 case reports of people taking clopidogrel during pregnancy, no birth defects were reported in 16 of the babies. A heart defect was reported in 1 baby. A single case report is not enough information to link an exposure to a birth defect. Also, in all of these reports, other medications were also taken during pregnancy. This makes it hard to know if clopidogrel, the combination of medications, or other factors are related to the reported heart defect.

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

Studies have not been done to see if clopidogrel increases 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).

Taking clopidogrel during labor or delivery may increase the chance of bleeding and hemorrhaging (too much blood loss) in the person giving birth. There is also an increased chance of spinal hematoma (when blood collects in the spine) when people who take clopidogrel get an epidural (injection of medication into the space around your spinal nerves to provide pain relief (analgesia) or numbness in one area of the body). The product label and professional medical societies, including the American Society of Regional Anesthesia and Pain Medicine and the American Academy of Pain Medicine, have recommended that anyone taking clopidogrel stop taking it 5-7 days before labor, delivery, or getting an epidural.

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

Studies have not been done to see if clopidogrel can cause behavior or learning issues for the child.

Breastfeeding while taking clopidogrel:

There are no published studies on the use of clopidogrel during breastfeeding. No side effects have been reported in a small number of infants exposed to clopidogrel through breast milk. If you suspect the baby has any symptoms (such as bruising or bleeding), contact the child's healthcare provider.

There is a theoretical concern (not proven) that if a baby is exposed to clopidogrel through breast milk, the baby's platelets may not work correctly. This has not been reported in the reports on infants exposed to clopidogrel through

breastmilk.

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

Studies have not been done in humans to see if clopidogrel could affect male fertility (ability to get partner pregnant) or increase the chance of birth defects above the background risk. In animal studies, there were no reported effects on fertility. In general, exposures that fathers or sperm donors 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](https://mothertobaby.org).

Disclaimer: MotherToBaby Fact Sheets are meant for general information purposes and should not replace the advice of your health care provider. MotherToBaby is a service of the non-profit Organization of Teratology Information Specialists (OTIS). *OTIS/MotherToBaby encourages inclusive and person-centered language. While our name still contains a reference to mothers, we are updating our resources with more inclusive terms. Use of the term mother or maternal refers to a person who is pregnant. Use of the term father or paternal refers to a person who contributes sperm.* Copyright by OTIS, April 1, 2024.