Clotrimazole

This sheet is about exposure to clotrimazole 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 clotrimazole?

Clotrimazole is a medication that has been used to treat fungal infections. As a cream, it has been used topically (on the skin) to treat skin infections and as a cream or suppository (inserted into the vagina) to treat vaginal infections. Clotrimazole is also available in oral lozenges. Some brand names for clotrimazole are Femcare®, Lotrimin®, and Mycelex®.

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.

What should I do if I think I have a vaginal yeast infection while pregnant?

Vaginal yeast infections are the most common infections in women, especially during pregnancy. If you think you have a vaginal yeast infection, it is important to see your healthcare provider to be sure the infection is yeast before trying to treat it on your own. If you have another type of infection, you may need different treatment.

I use clotrimazole. Can it make it harder for me to get pregnant?

Using clotrimazole is not expected to make it harder to get pregnant.

Does using clotrimazole increase the chance of miscarriage?

Miscarriage is common and can occur in any pregnancy for many different reasons. One study found a small increased chance for miscarriage with use of clotrimazole, but there were several problems with this study that could have affected the results. Other studies have not found that using clotrimazole increases the chance of miscarriage.

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

Studies of clotrimazole used on the skin or in the vagina during pregnancy have not found an increased chance of birth defects. Topical medications typically enter the body in lower amounts than when taken by mouth (oral medication). This means less medication would reach the developing fetus. Since topical clotrimazole is not well absorbed, it is unlikely to increase risks to a pregnancy.

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

Studies have not been done to see if clotrimazole 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).

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

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

Breastfeeding while taking clotrimazole:

There are no studies looking at clotrimazole use during breastfeeding. However, because only small amounts of the medication are expected to pass into breastmilk when clotrimazole is used topically, it is not expected to cause side effects in a nursing child. In pill form, clotrimazole has been given directly to infants under the care of a healthcare

provider to treat thrush (a common fungal infection caused by *Candida albicans*). If used on the nipples, any excess cream or ointment should be removed from the nipples before nursing. Be sure to talk to your healthcare provider about all your breastfeeding questions.

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

Studies have not been done to see if clotrimazole could affect male fertility (ability to get a woman pregnant) or increase the chance of birth defects. 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.

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