Fluphenazine (Prolixin®, Permitil®)

This sheet is about exposure to fluphenazine 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 fluphenazine?

Fluphenazine is a medication that has been used to treat schizophrenia. It can be given orally (by mouth) or by injection (a shot). Some brand names for fluphenazine are Prolixin® and Permitil®.

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

In some people, fluphenazine might raise the levels of a hormone called prolactin. High levels of prolactin can stop ovulation (part of the menstrual cycle when an ovary releases an egg). This could make it harder to get pregnant. Your healthcare provider can test your levels of prolactin if there is concern.

Does taking fluphenazine increase the chance of miscarriage?

Miscarriage is common and can occur in any pregnancy for many different reasons. One study did not find an increased chance of miscarriage in 244 pregnancies exposed to fluphenazine in first trimester of pregnancy.

Does taking fluphenazine 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. It is not known if fluphenazine can increase the chance of birth defects. Animal studies have raised some concern about a higher chance for birth defects. However, animal studies cannot always predict if or how a medication would affect a human pregnancy. One study in humans included 244 women exposed to fluphenazine; no increased chance of birth defects was reported.

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

One study did not been find an increased chance of pregnancy-related problems such as preterm delivery (birth before week 37). Studies have not been done to see if fluphenazine can increase the chance of low birth weight (weighing less than 5 pounds, 8 ounces [2500 grams] at birth).

I need to take fluphenazine throughout my pregnancy. Will it cause withdrawal symptoms in my baby after birth?

The use of fluphenazine during pregnancy can cause temporary symptoms in newborns soon after birth. These symptoms are sometimes referred to as withdrawal. Symptoms can include unusual muscle movements, stiff or floppy muscle tone, being sleepier than expected, agitation, tremors, trouble breathing, and problems with feeding. Not all babies exposed to fluphenazine will have these symptoms. It is important that your healthcare providers know you are taking fluphenazine so that if symptoms occur your baby can get the care that is best for them.

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

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

Breastfeeding while taking fluphenazine:

There is no published information on the use of fluphenazine in breastfeeding. Use of other medications like fluphenazine have not shown negative effects on infant development. If you suspect the baby has any symptoms (sleepiness or developmental problems), contact the child's healthcare provider. Be sure to talk to your healthcare

provider about all your breastfeeding questions.

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

Studies have not been done in men to see if fluphenazine could increase the chance of birth defects. Using fluphenazine may raise a person's levels of the hormone prolactin, which might affect a man's fertility (ability to get a woman pregnant). Animal studies have noted some changes in sperm shape and reduced number of offspring with exposure to fluphenazine. However, it is not clear if fluphenazine would cause similar changes in humans. 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.

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