Fluphenazine (Prolixin®, Permitil®)

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

What is fluphenazine?

Fluphenazine is a medication used to treat schizophrenia. Some brand names for fluphenazine are Prolixin® and Permitil®.

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

In some people, fluphenazine might increase the levels of the hormone prolactin. This is called hyperprolactinemia. High levels of prolactin might make it harder to get pregnant. Your healthcare provider can test your levels of prolactin if there is concern.

I just found out that I am pregnant. Should I stop taking fluphenazine?

Talk with your healthcare providers before making any changes to how you take your medications. For some people, the benefits of staying on their medication during pregnancy can outweigh the risks of an untreated condition. You and your healthcare team can best determine whether or not you should stop taking fluphenazine during pregnancy.

Does taking fluphenazine increase the chance for miscarriage?

Miscarriage can occur in any pregnancy. Studies have not been done to see if fluphenazine could increase the chance of miscarriage.

Does taking fluphenazine increase the chance of having a baby with a birth defect?

Every pregnancy starts out with a 3-5% chance of having a birth defect. This is called the background risk. There are no well controlled studies on fluphenazine use during pregnancy in humans. Animal studies have raised some concern about a higher chance for birth defects. However, animal studies cannot always predict how a medication would affect a human pregnancy. It is not known whether fluphenazine would increase the chance for birth defects in humans.

Could taking fluphenazine cause other pregnancy complications?

It is not known if fluphenazine can cause pregnancy complications. There are no human studies looking at exposure to fluphenazine during pregnancy.

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

It is possible that taking fluphenazine could increase the chance of withdrawal symptoms in a newborn. However, this has not been well studied. Babies exposed to fluphenazine near delivery can be monitored for symptoms such as abnormal involuntary muscle movements, stiff or floppy muscle tone, drowsiness, agitation, tremors, trouble breathing, and problems with feeding. If a baby developed these symptoms, in most cases they can be treated and are expected to go away without long term health effects.

Does taking fluphenazine in pregnancy cause long-term problems in behavior or learning for the baby?

Due to the lack to data in human pregnancy, it is not known if fluphenazine can cause long-term problems in behavior or learning.

Can I breastfeed my baby if I am taking fluphenazine?

Fluphenazine has not been studied for use while breastfeeding. The limited evidence suggests that small amounts of the drug pass into breast milk when doses of 1-5 mg a day (therapeutic doses). If you are taking fluphenazine while breastfeeding, the baby should be monitored for more sleepiness than usual. If you become worried about any symptoms that the baby has, contact the child’s healthcare provider. Be sure to talk to your healthcare provider about all of your breastfeeding questions.
I take fluphenazine. Can it make it harder for me to get my partner pregnant or increase the chance of birth defects?

In some people, fluphenazine might cause hyperprolactinemia, which has been associated with sexual dysfunction in males. This can make it harder to conceive a pregnancy. Cases of hypersexuality (having unusual or excessive concern with sexual activity) in males receiving fluphenazine have also been reported. Animal studies have noted some changes in sperm with exposure to fluphenazine, however; it is not clear if fluphenazine would cause similar sperm changes in humans.

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/pdf/.

Please click here for references.

National Pregnancy Registry for Psychiatric Medications: There is a pregnancy registry for women who take psychiatric medications, such as fluphenazine. For more information you can look at their website: https://womensmentalhealth.org/research/pregnancyregistry/.