



MotherToBaby

Medications & More During Pregnancy & Breastfeeding
Ask The Experts

Fact Sheet

by the **Organization of Teratology Information Specialists (OTIS)**

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Fluphenazine (Prolixin®, Permitil®)

This sheet talks 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 that has been used in the treatment of 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 a hormone called prolactin. 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 this medication. For some women, the benefits of staying on an antipsychotic during pregnancy can outweigh any possible concerns. Only you and your healthcare team know your medical history and 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 a miscarriage.

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

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. It is not known whether fluphenazine would increase the chance for birth defects. 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.

Could taking fluphenazine cause other pregnancy complications?

We don't know. There are no well controlled studies on fluphenazine use during pregnancy in humans.

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 born to women taking fluphenazine near delivery can be monitored for symptoms such as stiff or floppy muscle tone, drowsiness, agitation, tremors, difficulty 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.

Will taking fluphenazine during pregnancy affect my baby's behavior or cause learning problems?

This is not known. There are no well controlled studies on fluphenazine use during pregnancy in humans.

Can I breastfeed my baby if I am taking fluphenazine?

Fluphenazine has not been studied for use while breastfeeding. 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 health care provider about all of your breastfeeding questions.

What if the baby's father takes fluphenazine?

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 and Pregnancy at <https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/paternal-exposures-pregnancy/pdf/>.

Selected References

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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/>.

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