Fluticasone (Flovent®, Flonase®)

This sheet is about exposure to fluticasone 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 provider.

What is fluticasone?

Fluticasone is a type of corticosteroid used to treat asthma, severe allergies, and inflammation of the nasal lining (rhinitis). Fluticasone can be inhaled through the mouth (inhalers or nebulizers), used as a nasal spray, or applied topically (as a cream on the skin). When used to treat asthma, fluticasone is commonly taken through an inhaler that delivers the medication directly to the lungs instead of traveling throughout the body in the bloodstream. When fluticasone is taken as a nasal spray to treat allergies or rhinitis, the medication directly treats inflammation in the nasal passages. Common brand names include Flovent®, Flonase®, Xhanse®, and Cutivate®.

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.

MotherToBaby has a fact sheet on asthma available at: https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/asthma-and-pregnancy/.

When inhaled, sprayed in the nose, or applied topically, fluticasone is absorbed into the body in lower amounts compared to medication taken by mouth. It is unknown how much, if any, of the medication reaches a developing pregnancy. If the medication enters the bloodstream, the amount is expected to be small.

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

It is not known if fluticasone can make it harder to get pregnant.

Does taking fluticasone increase the chance of miscarriage?

Miscarriage is common and can occur in any pregnancy for many different reasons. Several small studies suggest that taking fluticasone is not expected to increase the chance of miscarriage.

Does taking fluticasone 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 fluticasone, might increase the chance of birth defects in a pregnancy. Studies show that taking fluticasone, whether inhaled, used as a nasal spray, or used topically, is not expected to increase the chance of birth defects.

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

Studies on fluticasone have not found an increased chance of 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)

Asthma that is not well controlled during pregnancy can increase the chances of preterm delivery, low birth weight, and other pregnancy complications. A recent study showed that treating asthma with inhaled corticosteroids, like fluticasone, might lower the chance of preterm delivery compared to having untreated asthma. Talk with your healthcare provider about the best way to treat your asthma during pregnancy.

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

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

Breastfeeding while taking fluticasone:

Fluticasone has not been studied for use during breastfeeding. However, the amount of medication that passes into breast milk following inhalation, use of a nasal spray, or topical use is likely small and not expected to cause side

effects in a breastfed child.

If fluticasone is being applied topically (to the skin), it is recommended to prevent the baby from coming into direct contact with the medication, such as avoiding topical use near the breast and washing your hands after application. If fluticasone is being applied to the nipples, it is recommended to apply it right after breastfeeding and to gently clean the area before breastfeeding again. Be sure to talk to your healthcare provider about all your breastfeeding questions.

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

Studies have not been done to see if fluticasone could affect men's fertility (ability to make healthy sperm) 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.

Questions? Call 866.626.6847 | Text 855.999.3525 | Email or Chat at MotherToBaby.org.

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