Guaifenesin

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

What is guaifenesin?
Guaifenesin is a medication that is an expectorant. Expectorants are used to thin and loosen mucus in the throat and lungs. This process makes it easier to cough up and remove the mucus from the body. Guaifenesin can be found in over-the-counter cough and cold medications.

I take guaifenesin. Can it make it harder for me to get pregnant?
Based on the data available, guaifenesin is not expected to make it harder to become pregnant.

I just found out I am pregnant. Should I stop taking guaifenesin?
Talk with your healthcare providers before making any changes to how you take your medication(s).

Does taking guaifenesin increase the chance for miscarriage?
Miscarriage can occur in any pregnancy. Based on the data available, it is not known if guaifenesin increases the chance for miscarriage.

Does taking guaifenesin increase the chance of birth defects?
Every pregnancy starts out with a 3-5% chance of having a birth defect. This is called the background risk. Most studies suggest that guaifenesin is not associated with an increased risk of birth defects over background risk.

Could taking guaifenesin cause other pregnancy complications?
Based on the data available, it is not known if guaifenesin can cause other pregnancy complications.

Does taking guaifenesin in pregnancy cause long-term problems in behavior or learning for the baby?
Based on the data available, it is not known if guaifenesin can cause behavior or learning issues.

Can I breastfeed while taking guaifenesin?
The use of guaifenesin while breastfeeding has not been studied and it is not known if guaifenesin can cause problems for a baby that is breastfeeding. The product label for guaifenesin recommends people who are breastfeeding not use this medication or use caution when using this medication during breastfeeding. This is because there is not enough information available on the use of guaifenesin to know if or how it could affect a pregnancy. However, the benefit of using guaifenesin might outweigh possible risks. Be sure to talk to your healthcare provider about all of your breastfeeding questions.

I take guaifenesin. Can it make it harder for me to get my partner pregnant or increase the chance of birth defects?
Fathers’ or sperm donors’ use of guaifenesin has not been studied for effects on fertility or pregnancy. In general, exposures that fathers or sperm donors have does not increase risk to a pregnancy. For more information, please see the MotherToBaby fact sheet on fact sheet Paternal Exposures at https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/paternal-exposures-pregnancy/.

Please click here for references.