



## Guaifenesin

In every pregnancy, a woman starts out with a 3-5% chance of having a baby with a birth defect. This percentage is called her background risk. This fact sheet gives information concerning the increased risks for birth defects with exposure to guaifenesin. The information included here should not take the place of medical advice from your health care provider.

### ***What is guaifenesin?***

Guaifenesin is an oral medication called 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 is the only expectorant approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and can be found in over-the-counter cough and cold medications.

### ***Can taking guaifenesin make it more difficult for me to become pregnant?***

There is no evidence that suggests taking guaifenesin will make it more difficult to become pregnant.

### ***Can taking guaifenesin during my pregnancy cause birth defects?***

Not likely. Most studies suggest that guaifenesin is not associated with an increase in birth defects.

### ***Can I take guaifenesin while breastfeeding?***

The use of guaifenesin while breastfeeding has not been studied. This means it is unknown if guaifenesin can affect a nursing baby. Breastfeeding mothers should talk to their healthcare provider before taking any medication.

### ***What if the father of the baby takes guaifenesin?***

A man's use of guaifenesin has not been studied for effects on pregnancy. In general, exposures that the father has does not increase risk to a pregnancy. For more information, please see the MotherToBaby fact sheet on Paternal Exposures at <https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/paternal-exposures-pregnancy/pdf/>.

### **Selected References:**

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