Guanfacine (Intuniv®, Tenex®)

This sheet is about exposure to guanfacine 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 guanfacine?

Guanfacine is a medication approved to treat high blood pressure and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). It has also been used for Gilles de la Tourette's syndrome, opioid withdrawal and sedation weaning (decreasing the amount of sedative medications someone is exposed to) in Intensive Care Units (ICU). Some brand names for guanfacine are Estulic®, Intuniv® and Tenex®.

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 this medication. Your healthcare providers can talk with you about the benefits of treating your condition and the risks of untreated illness during pregnancy. If you have been taking this medication regularly, you should not stop taking it suddenly. If you do plan to stop this medication, it should be stopped slowly under the care of your healthcare provider.

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

Studies have not been done to see if guanfacine could make it harder to get pregnant. Animal studies did not find that guanfacine affected fertility (ability to get pregnant).

Does taking guanfacine increase the chance of miscarriage?

Miscarriage is common and can occur in any pregnancy for many different reasons. Studies have not been done to see if guanfacine could increase the chance of miscarriage.

Does taking guanfacine 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 guanfacine, might increase the chance of birth defects in a pregnancy.

Guanfacine has not been well studied. In a small study of 30 pregnancies, no birth defects were reported after exposure to guanfacine. Animal studies also did not show an increased chance of birth defects.

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

Studies have not been done to see if guanfacine can increase the chance of other 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). One study looked at the pregnancies of 30 women who were given guanfacine to treat preeclampsia (high blood pressure and problems with organs, such as the kidneys),which can lead to seizures (called eclampsia).. They did not find changes in the fetal heart rate during pregnancy.

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

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

Breastfeeding while taking guanfacine:

Guanfacine has not been studied for use in breastfeeding. Talk with your healthcare provider about the best way to treat your medical condition while breastfeeding. Be sure to talk to your healthcare provider about all your breastfeeding questions.

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

Studies have not been done to see if guanfacine could affect men's fertility (ability to get a woman pregnant) 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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