Levofloxacin (Levaquin®)

This sheet is about exposure to levofloxacin 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 providers.

What is levofloxacin?

Levofloxacin (Levaquin®) is an antibiotic medication used to treat a variety of bacterial infections. It is part of a group of antibiotics called quinolones or fluoroquinolones.

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.

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

Studies have not been done to see if taking levofloxacin can make it harder to get pregnant.

Does taking levofloxacin increase the chance of miscarriage?

Miscarriage is common and can occur in any pregnancy for many different reasons. A study involving 136 first trimester levofloxacin exposed pregnancies found no increased chance for miscarriage.

Does taking levofloxacin 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 levofloxacin, might increase the chance of birth defects in a pregnancy. No increased chance of birth defects was noted in 1 study with 112 pregnancies exposed to levofloxacin in the first trimester.

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

One study with 136 first trimester levofloxacin exposed pregnancies found no increased chance for 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).

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

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

Breastfeeding while taking levofloxacin:

Levofloxacin gets into breast milk in small amounts. Use of levofloxacin as eye drops is not expected to pose any significant risk to a breastfed infant. Levofloxacin has not been typically used in infants because of theoretical (not proven) concerns about adverse effects on cartilage in the infant's developing joints. Recent data have not been able to prove those theories. If nursing is avoided for 4 to 6 hours after each dose, the amount of levofloxacin in breastmilk will decrease. If you suspect the baby has any symptoms (diarrhea, thrush, or diaper rash), contact the child's healthcare provider.

Your healthcare providers can talk with you about using levofloxacin while breastfeeding and what treatment is best for you. Be sure to talk to your healthcare provider about all your breastfeeding questions.

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

Studies have not been done to see if levofloxacin could affect male fertility (ability to make healthy sperm) or increase the chance of birth defects. In general, exposures that men 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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