Lysergic Acid Diethylamide (LSD)

This sheet talks about exposure to Lysergic Acid Diethylamide (LSD) in pregnancy and while breastfeeding. This information should not take the place of medical care and advice from your healthcare provider.

What is LSD?
Lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) is a drug that causes an altered state of mind (hallucinations/delusions). Some physical effects of LSD on the body can include increased blood pressure, fast heart rate, and dilated pupils. This drug is usually taken by mouth, but can also be taken by injection (using a needle) or by inhalation (breathing it into lungs). “Acid”, “Kool-Aid”, and “Blotter Paper” are examples of slang or street names for LSD.

I take LSD. Can use of LSD make it harder for me to get pregnant?
Studies on women have not been done to see if LSD could make it harder for a woman to get pregnant.

I am taking LSD, but I would like to stop taking it before becoming pregnant. How long does the drug stay in my body?
LSD breaks down differently in each person and depends on the amount of LSD taken. On average, it is thought that most of the LSD is gone from the blood stream in one or two days.

Does taking LSD increase the chance for miscarriage?
Miscarriage can occur in any pregnancy. Two studies from the early 1970s reported an increase in miscarriage when women took LSD in pregnancy. However, the authors of these studies stated it is not confirmed that LSD use caused the miscarriages.

Does taking LSD increase the chance of birth defects?
In every pregnancy, a woman starts out with a 3-5% chance of having a baby with a birth defect. This is called her background risk.

Many of the studies on LSD are very old and have different results. Some small studies of LSD use in pregnancy did not find an increased chance of birth defects. There are reports of babies being born with birth defects after their mothers used LSD while pregnant, but there is little evidence that LSD caused the those birth defects. No pattern of birth defects has been reported with LSD use during pregnancy.

Could taking LSD cause other pregnancy complications?
It is hard to study how LSD might affect a pregnancy. This is because people who use LSD might also have unhealthy lifestyles that can result in a variety of health problems for both the mother and a pregnancy. For example, poor diet choices can lead to mothers not having enough nutrients to support a healthy pregnancy, and could increase the chance of miscarriage and birth before 37 weeks of pregnancy (premature birth). Some people who use LSD also use other drugs, such as alcohol or marijuana. These can affect a mother’s health and a pregnancy.

Does taking LSD in pregnancy cause long-term problems in behavior or learning for the baby?
Long term studies have not been done to follow pregnancies with exposure to LSD to see if using LSD during pregnancy causes learning or behavioral problems for the child.

Can I breastfeed while taking LSD?
LSD has not been well studied for use during breastfeeding. If you are taking LSD while breastfeeding and you suspect that the baby has unusual symptoms, contact the child’s healthcare provider. Be sure to talk with your healthcare provider about all of your breastfeeding questions.

If a man takes LSD, could it affect his fertility (ability to get partner pregnant) or increase the chance of birth defects?
There are no confirmed reports that prior use of LSD would increase the chance of having a baby with a birth defect. In general, exposures that fathers have are unlikely to increase risks to pregnancy. For more information, please see the MotherToBaby fact sheet on Paternal Exposures at https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/paternal-exposures-pregnancy/pdf/.

Please click here for references.