Meclizine

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

What is meclizine?
Meclizine is a medication used to treat nausea and vomiting, motion sickness, and vertigo (a feeling of whirling and loss of balance). It is an antihistamine (medication used to stop some allergic or cold symptoms) and might cause drowsiness. Some brand names for meclizine have included: Antivert®, Bonine® and Meclicot®. Meclizine comes in several over-the-counter (OTC) products such as some Dramamine® products.

I take meclizine. Can it make it harder for me to become pregnant?
Studies have not been done to see if meclizine could make it harder for a woman to get pregnant.

I just found out I am pregnant. Should I stop taking meclizine?
You should always talk with your healthcare provider before making any changes to your medications. It is important to consider the benefit of your treatment.

Does taking meclizine increase the chance for miscarriage?
Miscarriage can occur in any pregnancy. Studies have not been done to see if meclizine increases the chance for miscarriage.

Does taking meclizine in the first trimester 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. Based on the data available, meclizine has not been shows to cause an increased chance for birth defects when used in pregnancy.

Could taking meclizine in the second or third trimester cause other pregnancy complications?
There are no data looking at the use of meclizine and the chance for other complications to a pregnancy.

Does taking meclizine in pregnancy cause long-term problems in behavior or learning in the baby?
There are no studies looking at long-term effects on children who were exposed during pregnancy.

Can I breastfeed while taking meclizine?
There is no information on meclizine use while breastfeeding. However, if you need to use this medicine often or in large doses (given by injection), talk with your healthcare provider. If you suspect that the baby has symptoms, contact the child’s healthcare provider.

It is possible, but not proven, that antihistamines in general may lower the amount of breastmilk a woman makes. This might be more likely to happen if antihistamines are used in combination with an oral decongestant like pseudoephedrine (Sudafed®), or if used before breastfeeding is fully established (when baby is first born). Talk to your healthcare provider about all of your breastfeeding questions.

If a man takes meclizine, could it affect his fertility (ability to get partner pregnant) or increase the chance of birth defects?
There are no studies looking at how a man’s use of meclizine would affect his fertility or a partner’s pregnancy.
In general, exposures that fathers 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/pdf/.

Selected References: