

Ofloxacin

This sheet is about exposure to ofloxacin 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 ofloxacin?

Ofloxacin belongs to a class of antibiotic medications called quinolones. It works by killing bacteria that causes infections and has been used to treat ***Staphylococcus aureus*** (Staph), and ***Escherichia coli*** (***E. coli***). Ofloxacin can be given as a tablet, an ophthalmic solution (eye drops) and as an ear drop. In general, eye and ear drops result in lower medication exposure for the pregnancy than oral (swallowed) medications.

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.

It is important to treat infections. Some infections, such as Staph or ***E. coli***, can increase the chance of pregnancy-related problems or infections in a newborn baby if not properly treated during pregnancy. MotherToBaby has fact sheets on Staph here: <https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/staphylococcus-aureus-pregnancy/> and ***E. coli*** here: <https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/e-coli-pregnancy/>.

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

It is not known if ofloxacin can make it harder to get pregnant. There has been 1 study done in humans to see if ofloxacin affected a woman's fertility (ability to get pregnant). The study reported an increased chance of infertility (trouble getting pregnant). One study is not enough to know if ofloxacin can affect fertility. Also, this study did not look at the reason people were taking ofloxacin or if they had any other health conditions. This makes it hard to know if the medication, health conditions, or other factors are related to the reported infertility.

Does taking ofloxacin increase the chance of miscarriage?

Miscarriage is common and can occur in any pregnancy for many different reasons. Two studies looking at 749 women taking ofloxacin during pregnancy did not report an increased chance of miscarriage.

Does taking ofloxacin 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 ofloxacin, might increase the chance of birth defects in a pregnancy. A study with 288 women taking ofloxacin during the first trimester of pregnancy reported no increased chance of birth defects.

There is a theoretical (not proven) concern that ofloxacin exposure in pregnancy might damage cartilage (connective tissue that protects bones and joints) in the fetus. While problems with cartilage have been reported in some (not all) animal studies, similar findings have not been reported in children exposed to ofloxacin and other similar medications during pregnancy.

When ofloxacin is used as an eye or ear drop to treat an infection, the medication is expected to work locally (in the eye or ear) and significant exposure for the developing fetus is not expected.

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

In 2 studies with a total of 749 women, ofloxacin use did not increase the chances of preterm delivery (birth before week 37) and low birth weight (weighing less than 5 pounds, 8 ounces [2500 grams] at birth).

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

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

Breastfeeding while taking ofloxacin:

When taken by mouth, ofloxacin passes into breast milk in amounts smaller than doses that would be prescribed to children. Ofloxacin is usually considered compatible with breastfeeding. Breastfed infants should be monitored for symptoms such as diarrhea, thrush, or diaper rash.

There is a theoretical (not proven) concern that ofloxacin exposure through breast milk might damage cartilage (connective tissue that protects bones and joints) in the breastfed infant. Cartilage damage has not been reported in infants exposed to ofloxacin via breast milk.

Ofloxacin can also be prescribed as an eye or ear drop. In these cases, the amount of medication that gets into breast milk is expected to be less than with oral (by mouth) use, and side effects are less likely to occur.

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

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

Three studies have been done to see if ofloxacin affects men's fertility (ability to get a woman pregnant) or increase the chance of birth defects. No reported effects on sperm were reported when ofloxacin was taken at recommended doses. 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](https://mothertobaby.org).

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