



MotherToBaby

Medications & More During Pregnancy & Breastfeeding
Ask The Experts

Fact Sheet

by the **Organization of Teratology Information Specialists (OTIS)**

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Oxymetazoline

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

What is oxymetazoline?

Oxymetazoline is a medication that is used in nasal sprays (sprayed into nostrils) and topical preparations (applied to skin). Oxymetazoline has been used to treat nasal congestion, eye inflammation, and skin redness. Oxymetazoline works by constricting blood vessels (makes the blood vessels smaller). Oxymetazoline can be found in prescription products and in many over the counter products. Some examples are: Afrin®, Dristan®, Nostrilla®, Rhofade®, and Vicks®.

I use oxymetazoline. Can it make it harder for me to get pregnant?

Studies have not been done in women to see if oxymetazoline could make it harder to get pregnant.

I just found out that I am pregnant. Should I stop taking oxymetazoline?

Talk with your healthcare providers before making any changes to this medication.

Does taking oxymetazoline increase the chance for miscarriage?

Miscarriage can occur in any pregnancy. Studies have not been done to see if oxymetazoline increases the chance for a miscarriage.

Does taking oxymetazoline 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. A small number of studies on oxymetazoline use have not found that oxymetazoline increases the chance of birth defects.

Could taking oxymetazoline in the second or third trimester cause other pregnancy complications?

Oxymetazoline did not affect uterine blood flow in 12 pregnancies when the healthy mother was given a one-time nasal spray dose.

Does taking oxymetazoline in pregnancy cause long-term problems in behavior or learning for the baby?

This has not been studied with the use of oxymetazoline.

Can I breastfeed while taking oxymetazoline?

Oxymetazoline has not been well studied for use while breastfeeding. However, since this is not an oral medication (it is sprayed into nose or rubbed onto skin) it is thought that very little of the medication could reach breastmilk. Be sure to talk to your healthcare provider about all of your breastfeeding questions.

If a man takes oxymetazoline, could it affect his fertility (ability to get partner pregnant) or increase the chance of birth defects?

This has not been studied. 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 and Pregnancy at <https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/paternal-exposures-pregnancy/pdf/>.

Selected References:

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