

Oxymetazoline

This sheet is about exposure to oxymetazoline in 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 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. It works by making the blood vessels narrower (constricting blood vessels). Oxymetazoline can be found in prescription products and in many over the counter products, such as Afrin®, Dristan®, Nostrilla®, Rhofade®, and Vicks®.

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

It is not known if oxymetazoline can make it harder to get pregnant.

Does taking oxymetazoline increase the chance for miscarriage?

Miscarriage is common and can occur in any pregnancy for many different reasons. Studies have not been done to see if oxymetazoline increases the chance for miscarriage.

Does taking oxymetazoline increase the chance of birth defects?

Every pregnancy starts out with a 3-5% chance of having a birth defect. This is called the background risk. Oxymetazoline is not expected to increase the chance of birth defects above the background risk.

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

Studies have not been done to see if oxymetazoline increases the 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).

A report of 12 pregnancies in healthy women exposed to a one-time nasal spray dose of oxymetazoline showed no effect on uterine blood flow.

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

Studies have not been done to see if oxymetazoline can cause behavior or learning issues for the child.

Breastfeeding while taking oxymetazoline:

Oxymetazoline has not been well-studied for use while breastfeeding. Since oxymetazoline is sprayed into the nose or rubbed onto skin, it is thought that very little of the medication passes into breastmilk. Be sure to talk to your healthcare provider about all your breastfeeding questions.

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

Studies have not been done to see if oxymetazoline could affect a man's fertility or increase the chance of birth defects above the background risk. 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](#) to view references.

Questions? Call 866.626.6847 | Text 855.999.3525 | Email or Chat at [MotherToBaby.org](https://www.MotherToBaby.org).

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