

Prilocaine

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

What is prilocaine?

Prilocaine is a local anesthetic. Local anesthetics are used to numb areas of the body for short periods of time. Prilocaine is approved for use as an injection (given by shot) during dental procedures. It has also been used for surgical procedures on other areas of the body, such as the foot..

Prilocaine is also found in a topical cream (used on the skin) called EMLA®. EMLA® cream also contains the medication lidocaine. For more information on lidocaine, please see the MotherToBaby fact sheet at: <https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/lidocaine/>.

There are case reports of people developing a medical condition called methemoglobinemia after exposure to prilocaine. Methemoglobinemia is when the blood does not deliver enough oxygen to the body's cells. While anyone could develop this side effect from using prilocaine, it may be more likely to happen in some people than in others. One article that reviewed case reports of methemoglobinemia suggested that prilocaine should not be used in pregnant women. Talk with your healthcare providers about using prilocaine and any risks specific to you.

I was given prilocaine by my dentist for a procedure. Can it make it harder for me to get pregnant?

Studies have not been done to see if prilocaine could make it harder to get pregnant. An experimental animal study did not report that prilocaine would affect fertility (ability to get pregnant).

Does prilocaine increase the chance for miscarriage?

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

Does prilocaine 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. Studies have not been done to see if prilocaine increases the chance for birth defects. Experimental animal studies did not suggest that prilocaine would significantly increase the chance of birth defects.

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

Prilocaine has not been well studied for use in pregnancy. There have been case reports of methemoglobinemia in newborns after pregnant people received prilocaine in high doses.

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

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

Breastfeeding while taking prilocaine:

Prilocaine has not been well studied for use while breastfeeding. Be sure to talk to your healthcare provider about all of your breastfeeding questions.

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

Studies have not been done to see if prilocaine could affect male fertility or increase the chance of birth defects. In general, exposures that fathers or sperm donors have are unlikely to increase the 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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