

Selegiline

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

What is selegiline?

Selegiline is a medication approved to treat major depressive disorder and to help treat Parkinson's disease. It has also been used to treat other medical conditions. It is in a class of medications known as selective inhibitors of monoamine oxidase type B. It is available as a skin (transdermal) patch, sold under the name Emsam®. It can also be taken by mouth (orally) and is sold under brand names such as Eldepryl® and Zelapar®.

Sometimes when people 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 this medication. In general, monoamine oxidase inhibitors are avoided during pregnancy because of their side effects and interactions with other medications. However, they have been used when other medications have not been effective. Your healthcare providers can talk with you about the benefits of treating your condition and the risks of untreated illness during pregnancy.

If you and your healthcare provider decide that you should stop this medication, you should discuss the best way to stop. It may be suggested to slowly lower the amount taken (taper off) because some people can experience withdrawal symptoms after stopping monoamine oxidase inhibitors. This may include flu-like symptoms such as sweating, chills, nausea, and headaches, as well as anxiety, agitation, and trouble sleeping.

If you are taking this medication for depression, MotherToBaby has a fact sheet on depression at: <https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/depression-pregnancy/>.

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

Answer if info available; otherwise: It is not known if selegiline can make it harder to get pregnant.

Does taking selegiline increase the chance of miscarriage?

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

Does taking selegiline 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. It is not known if taking selegiline could increase the chance for birth defects. Experimental animal studies did not find a higher chance for birth defects. There are 3 case reports on people who became pregnant while being treated with selegiline and other medications. Two people stopped taking selegiline and 1 continued to use the medication through the pregnancy; all 3 had healthy infants.

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

Studies have not been done to see if selegiline 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).

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

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

Breastfeeding while taking selegiline:

Selegiline has not been well studied for use while breastfeeding. There are 2 case reports of breastfeeding; no reported issues with development was reported. It is not known how much selegiline would get into breastmilk. Be sure to talk to your healthcare provider about all of your breastfeeding questions.

If a male takes selegiline, could it affect fertility (ability to get partner pregnant) or increase the chance

of birth defects?

Studies have not been done to see if selegiline 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](#) for references.

National Pregnancy Registry for Psychiatric Medications: There is a pregnancy registry for women who take psychiatric medications, such as selegiline. For more information you can look at their website: <https://womensmentalhealth.org/clinical-and-research-programs/pregnancyregistry/>.

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

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