

Over The Counter Medications That Are Safe In Pregnancy

The following is a quick reference to help guide women in choosing the safest over the counter medications while they are pregnant. Keep in mind all drugs carry some risk during pregnancy.

Cough and Cold Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In general, women experiencing cold symptoms should start with nondrug therapy (fluids, rest, saline nasal spray, gargling with salt water, hard candy, etc). Try to avoid medications during the first trimester and if necessary choose single-ingredient products. Avoid long-acting, extended release and/or alcohol containing products.
Decongestants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helps with nasal congestion symptoms 1st line: Saline Nasal Spray (eg. Salinex®) 1 spray 3-4 times a day 2nd line: Xylometazoline (eg. Otrivin®) 2-3 sprays 3 times a day for 3 days Oxymetazoline (eg. Dristan long acting) 2-3 sprays twice daily for 3 days 2nd line agents should be used for a few days only to avoid rebound congestion
Cough Suppressants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For wet/productive coughs-water can act as a natural expectorant and help thin out the mucus. For dry coughs-try sucking on a hard candy or use a humidifier if the room is too dry. Read labels carefully on the different lozenges available and talk to your pharmacist if you are not sure of the ingredients. Avoid products with ethanol. Dextromethorphan syrup (eg. Benylin DM®) 1-2 tsp every 4-6 hours
Allergies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Antihistamines help with allergy symptoms; itchy watery eyes and runny nose 1st line: Chlorphenaramine (eg. Chlor-Tripolon®) 4mg every 4-6 hours (Max 24mg/d) Diphenhydramine (eg. Benadryl®) 25mg every 4-6 hours (Max 250mg/d) 2nd line: Loratadine (Claritin®) 10mg daily Cetirizine (Reactine®) 5-10mg daily
Pain and Fever	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) is safe to use throughout pregnancy and is the drug of choice for pain or fever. Ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®) and aspirin should be avoided late in pregnancy. Women should also try to avoid NSAIDs (ibuprofen, Advil®, Motrin®, Aleve®, naproxen) around conception and in the first trimester due to new concerns. Ideally ibuprofen should be avoided if less than 12 weeks of pregnancy and greater than 32 weeks of pregnancy. Acetaminophen (eg. Tylenol®) 325-500mg every 4-6 hours (Max 4g/day) Ibuprofen (eg. Advil®, Motrin®) 200-400mg every 6-8 hours (Max: 2.4-3.2g/day), safe between 12-32 weeks.
Nausea and Vomiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dietary modifications such as eating small frequent meals can be helpful for nausea. Avoid strong odors and get plenty of rest. Alternative options such as acupuncture and acupressure may be beneficial. Diclectin® (<i>prescription only</i>) – safe and effective treatment. See your doctor. Vitamin B6 (pyridoxine) 10-25mg 3-4 times a day Dimenhydrinate 25mg (eg. Gravol®) 50-100mg every 4-6 hours (Max: 400mg/day)
Heartburn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eat light meals and avoid drinking or eating 3 hours before going to sleep. Avoid spicy, acidic (ie. citrus, tomato sauce) and fatty foods. Magnesium-aluminum hydroxide antacids (eg. Maalox®, Mylanta®) Calcium carbonate (eg. Tums®)

	H2-blockers (eg. Zantac®, Pepsid®) • Alginates (eg. . Gaviscon®)
Constipation	• Increase dietary fibres (e.g., bran, cereals, nuts, dates, fruits and vegetables, prune juice) and increase fluid consumption (8 glasses of water a day) • Bulk forming fiber (eg. Metamucil®, Podium®) • Laxatives – Lactulose 15-30mls 1-2 times/day, Lax-A-Day®, Restoralax ®
Vaginal Infections	• Always consult your health care professional when a vaginal infection is suspected.

Drugs that should not be touched by pregnant women

There are some drugs that should not be handled by pregnant women, if absorbed through the skin or inhaled it can cause problems in a developing fetus. If you are pregnant and accidentally touch one of these drugs, you should immediately clean the exposed area with soap and water.

Drugs to avoid: Proscar, Propecia, Avodart, Androgel, Androderm, CellCept, Efudex, Cytovene, Virazole Pegasys, Pegatron, methotrexate, cyclophosphamide.

All products mentioned above are safe in pregnancy. Please let your primary care provider know about all your medications including prescriptions, over-the-counter and supplements. If you are unsure about safety, ask your primary care provider or pharmacist. You can also call Motherisk, a widely used resource based at Sick Kids Hospital.

www.motherisk.org

1-877-439-2744 Motherisk Helpline

1-800-436-8477 Morning Sickness

1-877-327-4636 Alcohol and Substance

1-866-937-7678 Exercise in Pregnancy

1-888-246-5840 HIV and HIV Treatment

416-813-6780 Motherisk Helpline