

Benzocaine

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

What is benzocaine?

Benzocaine is a topical local anesthetic. Local anesthetics are used to numb areas of the body for short periods of time. Benzocaine can be found in some over the counter pain relieving products.

Very little of benzocaine is likely to be absorbed across the skin. Since so little of the medication passes into the body, the amount that would reach a developing baby, if any, is unlikely to be a high amount.

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

Studies have not been done to see if benzocaine use could make it harder to get pregnant.

Does taking benzocaine increase the chance for miscarriage?

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

Does taking benzocaine increase the chance of birth defects?

Every pregnancy starts out with a 3-5% chance of having a baby with a birth defect. This is called background risk. Two reports did not find a greater chance for birth defects among 73 children whose mothers reported using benzocaine in the first trimester of pregnancy.

Since very little benzocaine is expected to be absorbed through the skin it is unlikely that a significant amount would reach the developing baby. Given the topical use of this medication, it is unlikely there would be an increased chance for birth defects if used as directed.

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

Studies have not been done to see if benzocaine 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 at birth).

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

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

Breastfeeding while taking benzocaine:

Benzocaine has not been well studied for use during breastfeeding. However, as long as benzocaine is not applied to the breast or nipple so that a nursing child could not get it in their mouth, it should be okay to continue to breastfeed. Wash hands well after using benzocaine. Talk to your healthcare providers about all of your breastfeeding questions.

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

Studies have not been done to see if benzocaine 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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