



Asthma and Pregnancy

Women who are pregnant and have good control over their asthma can still generally have a normal pregnancy with little or no increased risk to themselves or their babies.

Why is good asthma control important during pregnancy?

It is important for you to maintain good control over your asthma during your pregnancy to ensure that your baby is getting enough oxygen. When asthma is not controlled, there is less oxygen in the woman's blood and thus less oxygen in the baby's blood. Decreased oxygen in the baby's blood can keep the baby from normal growth, development and survival.

How will asthma medicines affect my baby?

Studies on women who are pregnant have shown that most inhaled asthma medicines are safe for use during pregnancy. It is safer for women who are pregnant to treat their asthma using medicines instead of leaving their asthma untreated. There are a few medicines that are used for asthma flare-ups that will need to be discussed with your health care provider (often these come in pill form). Your health care provider will work with you to make sure they are administered in the safest way for you and your baby.

Can asthma improve during pregnancy?

Women who are pregnant and have asthma each have different experiences. Their asthma can get better, worse or stay the same. The reason for these changes is unknown, but it is possible that higher cortisone levels as a result of pregnancy can affect asthma. Cortisone is a hormone that is released in the body as a reaction to stress.

Can I still get allergy shots while I'm pregnant?

Allergy shots have been proven to be very safe during pregnancy. The health care provider who gives you your shots will make sure you get the right dose to reduce risk of an allergic reaction from the shots. It is not usually recommended to

start allergy shot treatments for the first time while you are pregnant. You should discuss any concerns about remaining on shots with your health care provider and jointly reach the best decision for you.

Can women with asthma do Lamaze?

Most pregnant women with asthma can perform Lamaze breathing without difficulty.

Suggestions for women who are pregnant and have asthma:

- Ensure good communication between the health care providers for your pregnancy and your asthma.
- Ask your health care provider to monitor your lung function throughout your pregnancy.
- If your asthma is moderate or severe, talk with your health care provider about considering an ultrasound after 32 weeks of your pregnancy.
- To avoid asthma flare-ups, try to avoid asthma triggers such as tobacco smoke, dust mites, pet dander and mold to the best of your ability.
- Receive your annual flu vaccine before flu season starts, which is usually from October to March. The flu vaccine is safe and recommended for women who are pregnant.

