

Comprehensive Care Center

Yashica Shah MD, FACOG
Steven Haskel MD, FACOG • Samra Shafiq DO
Elana Grann MSN, APN • Elizabeth Colaiocco APN, BC

OVER THE COUNTER MEDICATIONS IN PREGNANCY

Medications- Unfortunately when it comes to the use of many common over-the-counter medications in pregnancy, the research is still quite lacking. Our best advice is to limit the use of any medication unless it is really needed, and stick to the medications that are well studied and suggest the lowest risk. Here is a list of common ailments and over-the-counter meds that would be appropriate for that condition. These medications are all considered generally safe to take in pregnancy or there is no evidence to suggest an increased risk of birth defects.

- Fever: Acetaminophen (Tylenol) as directed
- Pain: Acetaminophen (Tylenol) as directed
- Do not take Advil, Motrin, Aspirin, or other NSAIDs
- Nasal Congestion: If increasing fluid intake does not help with mucus expectoration, you can try a saline nasal spray or Diphenhydramine (Benadryl) as directed. Advise your doctor if symptoms of nasal congestion worsen or persist beyond several days. Sinus infections can develop and may need to be treated with antibiotics.
- Constipation: Metamucil fiber supplement if dietary sources of fiber and increased water intake are insufficient. If Metamucil doesn't help, you may try a stool softener like docusate sodium, as directed.
- Cough suppressant- Dextromethorphan is commonly used. You may add guaifenesin if necessary (Robitussin DM) as directed. Avoid cold products that contain pseudoephedrine.
- Nausea: if non medical therapies fail, try Doxylamine with Vitamin B6 as directed
- Itching: oatmeal baths, Diphenhydramine (Benadryl) as directed
- Heartburn: If non-medical therapies fail, you can try TUMS as directed. Stronger medications may be required if symptoms do not improve. Heartburn is common in pregnancy, but its symptoms can often be confused with other conditions. If you have persistent epigastric pain that does not go away, tell us as soon as possible.

- Remember- take these medications in the dosages recommended on the package. Do not exceed the recommended dosage. Sometimes you will need a stronger medication to manage a condition- call us if you have tried these over the counter meds but did not get any relief. In some cases, the risks of not treating an illness can be worse than the risks of treating it with a stronger medication.