

Congratulations on your pregnancy!

Some important things for pregnant women with epilepsy to follow during their pregnancy are:

- Continue taking your seizure medication throughout your pregnancy.
- Take extra folic acid
- Have your blood levels checked
- Give us permission to communicate with your OB MD
- Keep your appointments with us
- If you have a seizure call your OB MD and our office
- Please consider enrolling in the Epilepsy Pregnancy Registry

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Strong Epilepsy Center



Pregnancy and Epilepsy



Initial Instructions for Pregnant Women with Epilepsy

Continue taking your seizure medication regularly throughout your pregnancy. This is one of the most important things you can do. Some women are afraid of continuing taking seizure medications during pregnancy because they feel it will hurt their baby. Actually, having a big seizure during your pregnancy can potentially cause much more harm to you and your baby.

Start taking 4 mg of folic acid daily in addition to your pre-natal vitamin. You can buy folic acid over the counter. It comes in 400 mcg tablets and is very inexpensive (about \$3-4 per bottle). Therefore, you will need to take 10 tablets a day. Some insurance companies will pay for 1 mg tablets with a prescription. It is typically found in the vitamin section of a store. If you cannot find it, ask someone at the pharmacy where it is. Some seizure medications lower folic acid levels in your body. Low folic acid levels can be linked to neurologic diseases, such as spina bifida. Even though it is not clear that extra folic acid will prevent some birth defects, there does not seem to be harm in higher doses.

We would like you to have your blood levels checked regularly throughout your pregnancy. Please call our office one week after your blood has been drawn so that we can review levels with you and adjust your medication doses if needed. Some blood levels, such as lamotrigine (Lamictal), drop by as much as half during pregnancy. The drop in blood levels puts you at risk of having a seizure. Often we need to increase the dose of seizure medication during a pregnancy to keep your levels steady. After you deliver, we will be instructing you to go back to your pre-pregnancy dose of medication within a week after you deliver so you do not get toxic on your medications.

If you have a seizure, call your OB-GYN office and our office.



Please complete a Release of Information form and give it to our office so that we can communicate with your OB-GYN provider. It is important that all providers communicate with each other to provide the best care for you and your baby.

Ideally, we like to see you in our office at least three times (once a trimester) during your pregnancy. We want to review how you are doing and assess your needs. You may be seen mostly by one of our Nurse Practitioners, however we try to have you seen at least once by your epilepsy doctor. We want to be able to answer your questions and to have ongoing communication with your OB-GYN doctor.

If you haven't received information about the Epilepsy Pregnancy Registry, ask your provider for this. Please consider enrolling in this as it will help other women who are pregnant and are on seizure medications.

www.aedpregnancyregistry.org