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Over the Counter Drug Use During Pregnancy-Is It Safe?

By Rebecca Pugh

- Tylenol-this is the best option for pain relief, but use only when necessary as it taxes the liver which is already under strain during pregnancy.
- Ibuprofen-this drug severely inhibits the body's blood clotting abilities which makes it dangerous during pregnancy and especially during labor, delivery and post-partum, it also taxes the kidneys-if necessary it should be used before the 3rd trimester.
- Benadryl-is an antihistamine and contains atropine sulfate, a chemical known to cause skeletal deformity in mice, but there is no evidence of this in humans-another antihistamine, Benedictin has been associated with birth defects and removed from the market-often antihistamines are used by physicians as part of a drug regimen to eliminate nausea due to pregnancy.
- Sudafed-this drug is a decongestant and contains antihistamines (see above) and epinephrine and phenylpropanolamine which are associated with a risk of birth defects-this drug is to be avoided, its studies are incomplete as to potential damage to mother or fetus.
- Cough Syrup-many of these drugs contain antihistamines and decongestants that are themselves made of many chemicals that have not been proven safe in pregnancy, each chemical component should be checked for safety-those containing codeine or iodine should certainly be avoided as they can affect the baby's ability to breathe or affect the fetal thyroid function, respectively.
- Alka Seltzer, Tums, Mylanta-these are all considered antacids which neutralize stomach acids, stopping digestion altogether, which is a poor temporary solution and is problematic for nutrient assimilation in pregnancy-they are considered safe in pregnancy but not considered the best remedy-try calcium/magnesium, taking a light walk after each meal, smaller meals, and not eating much in the evenings-the sodium bicarbonate content is absorbed into the bloodstream and adds to you total salt intake as a note of interest.

