

Pregnancy and Asthma Medications

Well controlled asthma carries less risk than poorly controlled or severe attacks.
Systemic cortico-steroids are Risk Category C (AVOID).
Inhaled steroids are Risk Category A (Acceptable)

From Australian Merck's Manual 2004

Control of asthma key for mothers-to-be

Physicians should pay close attention to managing asthma in pregnant patients, according to guidelines being released by the National Asthma Education and Prevention Program.

"Simply put, when a pregnant patient has trouble breathing, her fetus also has trouble getting the oxygen it needs," Dr. William Busse, professor of medicine at the University of Wisconsin Medical School and chairman of the panel that developed the guidelines, said in a statement.

Dr. Barbara Alving, the institute's acting director, said "the guidelines review the evidence on asthma medications used by pregnant patients. The evidence is reassuring, and suggests that it is safer to take medications than to have asthma exacerbations."

The guidelines were published in the Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology, Jan 14, 2005

Asthma is worse in pregnant women carrying female fetuses

Sunday Herald Sun, March 21, 2004

Scientists from the Mothers and Babies Research Centre at Newcastle's Hunter Medical Research Institute carried out research involving more than 150 pregnant women, including 33 non-asthmatic mothers.

It showed that asthmatic women carrying a female fetus suffered more from lung problems than those carrying a male fetus over the full course of the pregnancy. Senior research scientist Vicki Clifton said the finding emerged after previous research revealed low birth weights among girls born to asthmatic mothers.

Dr. Clifton said baby girls born to asthmatic mothers who did not use inhaled steroids were on average 500g lighter than babies born to non-asthmatic mothers, or mothers who took appropriate levels of medication.

Dr. Clifton said the findings highlighted the importance of asthma education for pregnant women and close monitoring of the condition during pregnancy.

"Indeed, the appropriate use of inhaled steroids for asthmatic mothers is vital for the growth of the female fetus," she said.