



## ASTHMA and PREGNANCY

Asthma during pregnancy is variable, meaning that asthma control may worsen, be unchanged, or improve and return to the pre pregnancy state within 3 months after birth. Before becoming pregnant, women with asthma should learn as much as they can about the condition, gain control of their asthma and talk with their doctors about asthma therapy during pregnancy

### Frequently Asked Questions

**Q.** Will my asthma symptoms get worse during my pregnancy?

**A.** The effects of pregnancy on asthma vary with each person and it is difficult to predict the course that asthma will follow in individual women who become pregnant for the first time. The following patterns have been observed:

- Where asthma symptoms improve during pregnancy, the improvement progresses gradually throughout pregnancy.
- The pattern of asthma during one pregnancy will often define the pattern of asthma during subsequent pregnancies.
- Asthma attacks seem to be most likely during weeks 17 through 24 of pregnancy possibly because women often discontinue their asthma medications when they become pregnant.
- In general asthma is less severe during the last 4 weeks of pregnancy (37-41 weeks).
- There is no association of worsening of asthma with labour and delivery

**Q.** Is it safe to take my asthma medications during my pregnancy?

**A.** Uncontrolled or poorly controlled asthma during pregnancy can produce serious complications for mother and baby. These complications include premature birth, low birth weight, maternal blood pressure changes. Acute episodes endanger the fetus by reducing the oxygen it receives; therefore it is very important to prevent an attack during pregnancy and the birthing process.

Studies have shown that treated asthmatic women have fewer adverse infant and maternal outcomes than those without therapy. This means that when asthma is controlled, pregnant women with asthma have no more complications during pregnancy and giving birth than non-asthmatic women.



Q. Can I still get the Influenza Vaccine when I am pregnant?

A. Yes, it can be given after the first three months of pregnancy. It is recommended for anyone who has identified viral infections as an asthma trigger.\* If you have an egg allergy talk to your doctor about this before taking the flu shot.

Q. Can I still exercise during pregnancy?

A. Exercise is allowed under the supervision of your doctor

Q. Can I still take antihistamines, decongestants and allergy shots?

A. It is Ok to continue with these medications if you are already taking them but normally they are not started during pregnancy.

To avoid asthma attacks control your environment and reduce your exposure to asthma triggers by:

- Taking your asthma medications as prescribed
- Avoiding exposure to specific known allergens
- Getting the flu shot
- Exercising
- Avoiding tobacco smoke