



For more information please speak to
your midwife

For further assistance or to receive this information in a
different format, please contact the department which
created this leaflet.

PATIENT INFORMATION

Withdrawal Symptoms in Babies. Information for Parents on Prescribed Medication



Working with you, for you

Breastfeeding

Most mothers are encouraged to breastfeed their babies,
Some medications, however, are not suitable for breastfeeding. It is worth discussing with your prescribing Doctor whilst pregnant, if there is a suitable alternative that is breastfeeding friendly.

Below are a couple of websites which give useful information on medication in pregnancy and breastfeeding. Please read with caution as these sites often only use very small amounts of women and babies to base studies on.

Also the information is often based on studies where babies are months old not newborns or premature babies.

<http://www.medicinesinpregnancy.org/Medicine--pregnancy>

<https://toxnet.nlm.nih.gov/newtoxnet/lactmed.htm>

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR PREGNANCY

Introduction

Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) is the name given to babies who show signs of withdrawal from prescribed medication which their mother may have been given during pregnancy.

This leaflet aims to provide you with information and advice to help you to prepare for the arrival of your baby and care for your baby if he or she has signs of withdrawal.

Prescribed medication in pregnancy

During pregnancy most prescribed medication that are taken (including illicit drugs, tobacco and alcohol) pass through the placenta and are absorbed by your baby.

When your baby is born, the medication no longer is passed to the baby via the placenta and he or she may go through a period of withdrawal.

Withdrawal symptoms can include -

- * High Pitched cry
- * Irritability and restlessness
- * Feeding difficulties/weight loss
- * Sleeping difficulties

Ways in which you can help your baby if they are showing any of these signs will be discussed later.

Caring for your baby

Most babies who are exposed to medication before birth will have some symptoms of withdrawal after birth, some of which might be very mild and can be managed with normal baby care.

Other babies can show signs of withdrawal that might need treatment on the Special Care Baby Unit (SCBU). (This is very rare).

A chart will be used to monitor and score your baby's symptoms. Staff will go through this with you so you can help decide how your baby is doing.

Babies who have been exposed to certain medication in pregnancy, will be discussed at the Perinatal Well-being Group attended by a Paediatrician, a Pharmacist, a midwife and any other relevant professional such as the Perinatal Team, involved in your care.

A plan will be made on feeding methods and length of your postnatal stay and any observations needed for your baby. This will be sent to you.

How can you help manage your baby's symptoms?

Symptom

What you can do

High pitched Cry / irritability

Hold firmly to your body, rocking gently and talking .
Dim lighting

Sleeping difficulties

Reduce light and noise
Settled, do not over handle baby

Frantic sucking of fists

Use mittens to prevent baby scratching face. Offer breast

Poor feeding

Might need small frequent feeds 2-3 hourly.
Try skin to skin to encourage breastfeeding

Loose stools

Change your baby's nappy regularly to prevent a sore bottom. Use nappy cream from birth. Keep a note if your baby has frequently loose stools and speak to staff for advice.