

Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) During Pregnancy

Acetaminophen is the preferred medicine in pregnancy for pain and fever. When taken as directed, it is considered the safest option for these symptoms.

- Ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®) and similar medications, also called non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), are not usually recommended during pregnancy, especially in the third trimester.
- Opioid medications, sometimes called narcotics (such as oxycodone, hydrocodone, and fentanyl), are also not routinely recommended.

Treating fever and pain matters.

- Untreated fever has been linked to birth defects, preterm labor, and neurodevelopmental problems.
- Untreated pain activates the body's stress response. It can cause anxiety and depression, interfere with daily activities, and negatively affect quality of life.
- Some pregnancy complications, especially preeclampsia, can be hard to diagnose. Whether someone responds to a pain medication like acetaminophen can help the care team diagnose preeclampsia and other severe conditions that can affect you and your baby.

Bottom line: For most pregnant people, acetaminophen is the best choice to treat pain and fever.

What about Autism?

Experts agree that there is no clear evidence that acetaminophen causes autism spectrum disorders.

- Autism spectrum disorder does not have a single cause. In fact, there are hundreds of genes that have been linked to autism spectrum disorder. Maternal fevers have also been linked to autism spectrum disorder.
- Large high-quality studies have not found an increased risk of autism or other developmental problems with acetaminophen use in pregnancy, especially when researchers consider other possible risk factors such as genetics and medical conditions.

Remember: Always talk with your healthcare provider before starting or continuing any medicine during pregnancy.

For more information, see statements from our national women's health experts:

