

Managing Asthma and Allergies during Pregnancy

Prevalence of Asthma and Allergy in Pregnant Women

Among pregnant women, 8 percent are affected by asthma and approximately 18 to 30 percent are affected by allergies. If asthma and allergy symptoms are kept under control during pregnancy, both expecting mother and baby should not experience any complications.

Asthma and Pregnancy

A growing baby requires lots of oxygen for normal growth and development. If your asthma symptoms are not under control this may cause a decrease in oxygen in your blood. Controlling your asthma symptoms will allow plenty of oxygen for you and your baby. Asthma medication can help control the symptoms of asthma and lower the risk to mother and baby. A mother's comfort during pregnancy should not be compromised because of asthma symptoms.

Effects of Asthma on Baby and Mother

If you suffer from severe asthma, your symptoms may become worse during pregnancy. Due to the nature of a pregnancy, hormone levels during pregnancy fluctuate and cause nasal congestion, increased number of sinus infections, shortness of breath, and may trigger an asthma attack. Newly pregnant women should contact our office to make an appointment so that she can undergo an evaluation. Asthma symptoms can and should be controlled for the comfort of the mother and baby. Fortunately, studies have shown that if a pregnant woman has been properly cared for and treated for asthma. The likelihood of an asthma attacks during the labor and delivery process of the pregnancy is very low.

Ways to Control Asthma and Allergies while Pregnant

- Use HEPA filters.
- Use filtered vacuum bags.
- Avoid outdoor activities between 5 AM and 10 AM.
- Close windows while driving, use air conditioner.
- Wash hands frequently to prevent infections.
- Do not smoke.
- Remove allergy causing pets from the house.
- Wash bedding weekly.
- Seal pillows, mattresses and box springs in special dust mite-proof casings.

Treatments during Pregnancy

There are many medicines which are safe to treat asthma and allergy symptoms. When considering medication for a pregnant woman, the benefit of the medication should always outweigh the risk of the uncontrolled asthma and allergy symptoms. Even though less than 1 percent of all birth defects are attributed to taking medication during the first trimester, we try to limit the use of medications during this time period to further decrease the risk of the baby. The medications we use have been thoroughly tested and have been proven to be safe for baby and mother.

Immunotherapy and Pregnancy

It is safe to continue with allergy shots (immunotherapy) during your pregnancy. Allergy shots will not harm your baby if carefully monitored for any reactions. You should not begin immunotherapy while pregnant.