

## FIRST TRIMESTER

### Does taking amoxicillin and clavulanic acid increase the chance of birth defects?

A baby's body and most internal organs are formed during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. It is mainly during this time that some medicines are known to cause birth defects.

Large studies of women using amoxicillin or penicillin V in early pregnancy do not suggest an increased chance of birth defects in their babies. Studies investigating amoxicillin-clavulanic acid have produced reassuring findings but were based on fewer women. Further research is required to confirm these results.

With every pregnancy there is a 3 to 5% risk of having a baby with a birth defect regardless of amoxicillin use.

### Can taking amoxicillin, co-amoxiclav, or penicillin V in pregnancy cause miscarriage or stillbirth?

No increased chance of miscarriage or stillbirth has been seen in large studies of pregnant women taking amoxicillin or penicillin V. Studies of amoxicillin-clavulanic acid have also produced reassuring findings but are based on fewer women. Further research is required to confirm these results.



## SECOND TRIMESTER

### Can taking amoxicillin, amoxicillin-clavulanic acid, or penicillin V in pregnancy cause preterm birth or my baby to be small at birth (low birth weight)?

Studies have not shown an increased chance of preterm birth (birth before week 37) or low birth weight (weighing less than 2500 grams at birth) in babies born to mothers taking amoxicillin-clavulanic acid or penicillin V during the second trimester. A small study found an increased chance of preterm birth and low birth weight for babies exposed in the womb to amoxicillin, however, larger, more reliable studies have not agreed with these findings.



## THIRD TRIMESTER

### Can taking amoxicillin, amoxicillin-clavulanic acid or penicillin V in pregnancy cause learning or behavioural problems in the child?

A baby's brain continues to develop right up until the end of pregnancy. It is therefore possible that taking certain medicines at any stage of pregnancy could have a lasting effect on a child's learning or behaviour.

One study that has followed hundreds of children up to age 11 years did not find that prenatal exposure to amoxicillin-clavulanic acid was linked to learning or behavior problems.

## BREASTFEEDING

Amoxicillin-clavulanic acid passes into breast milk in tiny amounts and is very unlikely to cause side effects in your baby. However, mild side effects (restlessness, diarrhea) have been reported in a small number of babies.

### Are there any risks to my baby if the father has taken amoxicillin?

There is no increased risk to your baby if the father took amoxicillin, amoxicillin-clavulanic acid, or penicillin V before or around the time you became pregnant.

## Why use Amoxicillin ?

Amoxicillin, amoxicillin-clavulanic acid and penicillin V are from a group of antibiotics called penicillins. Penicillins are used to treat a wide range of infections and are commonly prescribed during pregnancy.

It is very important to correctly treat an infection in pregnancy. Antibiotics may be recommended for some types of infection, where the benefits of treatment are thought to outweigh the possible risks to the developing baby.

## Is it safe to use amoxicillin or penicillin V in pregnancy?

Numerous studies of use of these antibiotics in pregnancy have found no evidence of risk to the developing baby. Treatment of bacterial infections during pregnancy may be crucial to the health of both mother and baby.

When deciding whether or not to take amoxicillin or penicillin V during pregnancy, it is important to weigh up how necessary this is to your health against the possible risks to you or your baby, some of which will depend on how many weeks pregnant you are. Your doctor is the best person to help you decide what is right for you and your baby.

## Are there any alternatives to taking penicillin in pregnancy?

Possibly, although alternative antibiotics may not work as well for some types of infection. Your dentist will be able to discuss why a particular antibiotic is the best treatment. If you are allergic to penicillin, you will be offered an alternative antibiotic that is safe for you to take.

## What if I prefer not to take medicines in pregnancy?

It is important that an infection in pregnancy is well-treated as it can lead to very unpleasant symptoms, as well as serious complications for both mother and baby. Your dentist will only prescribe medicines when necessary and will be happy to talk about any concerns.

## Who can I talk to if I have questions?

If you have any questions about the information in this leaflet please discuss them with your health care provider. They can access more detailed medical and scientific information from Mothersafe.

For more information call MotherSafe: NSW Medications in Pregnancy and Breastfeeding Service on 9382 6539 (Sydney Metropolitan Area) or 1800 647 848 (Non-Metropolitan Area) Monday –Friday 9am-5pm (excluding public holidays)

**Disclaimer:** This information is not intended to replace the individual care and advice of your health care provider. New information is continually becoming available. Whilst every effort will be made to ensure that this information is accurate and up to date at the time of publication, we cannot cover every eventuality and the information providers cannot be held responsible for any adverse outcomes following decisions made on the basis of this information. We strongly advise that printouts should NOT be kept for any length of time, or for "future reference" as they can rapidly become out of date.

# AMOXICILLIN, PENICILLIN AND AMOXICILLIN- CLAVULANIC ACID

Also called Augmentin Duo, AmoxyClav

*Information in this leaflet is general in nature and should not take the place of advice from your health care provider.*

