

# Fluphenazine (Prolixin®, Permitil®)

---

This sheet is about exposure to fluphenazine in pregnancy and while breastfeeding. This information should not take the place of medical care and advice from your healthcare provider.

## ***What is fluphenazine?***

Fluphenazine is a medication that has been used to treat schizophrenia. It can be given orally (by mouth) or by injection (a shot). Some brand names for fluphenazine are Prolixin® and Permitil®.

Sometimes when people find out they are pregnant, they think about changing how they take their medication, or stopping their medication altogether. However, it is important to talk with your healthcare providers before making any changes to how you take this medication. Your healthcare providers can talk with you about the benefits of treating your condition and the risks of untreated illness during pregnancy.

## ***I take fluphenazine. Can it make it harder for me to get pregnant?***

In some people, fluphenazine may raise the levels of a hormone called prolactin. High levels of prolactin can stop ovulation (part of the menstrual cycle when an ovary releases an egg). This would make it harder to get pregnant. Your healthcare provider can test your levels of prolactin if there is concern.

## ***Does taking fluphenazine increase the chance for miscarriage?***

Miscarriage is common and can occur in any pregnancy for many different reasons. Studies have not been done to see if fluphenazine could increase the chance of miscarriage.

## ***Does taking fluphenazine increase the chance of birth defects?***

Every pregnancy starts out with a 3-5% chance of having a birth defect. This is called the background risk. Based on the studies reviewed, it is not known if fluphenazine increases the chance for birth defects above the background risk. Animal studies have raised some concern about a higher chance for birth defects. However, animal studies cannot always predict if or how a medication would affect a human pregnancy.

## ***Does taking fluphenazine in pregnancy increase the chance of other pregnancy-related problems?***

Studies have not been done to see if fluphenazine increases the chance for pregnancy-related problems such as preterm delivery (birth before week 37) or low birth weight (weighing less than 5 pounds, 8 ounces [2500 grams] at birth).

## ***I need to take fluphenazine throughout my pregnancy. Will it cause withdrawal symptoms in my baby after birth?***

The use of fluphenazine during pregnancy can cause temporary symptoms in newborns soon after birth. These symptoms are sometimes referred to as withdrawal. Symptoms can include unusual muscle movements, stiff or floppy muscle tone, being sleepier than expected, drowsiness, agitation, tremors, trouble breathing, and problems with feeding. Not all babies exposed to fluphenazine will have these symptoms. It is important that your healthcare providers know you are taking fluphenazine so that if symptoms occur your baby can get the care that is best for them.

## ***Does taking fluphenazine in pregnancy affect future behavior or learning for the child?***

Studies have not been done to see if fluphenazine can cause behavior or learning issues for the child.

## ***Breastfeeding while taking fluphenazine:***

There is no published information on the use of fluphenazine in breastfeeding. Be sure to talk to your healthcare provider about all of your breastfeeding questions.

## ***If a male takes fluphenazine, could it affect fertility (ability to get partner pregnant) or increase the chance of birth defects?***

Using fluphenazine may raise a person's levels of the hormone prolactin, which may affect fertility. Animal studies have noted some changes in sperm with exposure to fluphenazine. It is not clear if fluphenazine would cause similar sperm changes in humans. Studies have not been done to see if fluphenazine could increase the chance of birth defects above the background risk. In general, exposures that fathers or sperm donors have are unlikely to increase the risks to a pregnancy. For more information, please see the MotherToBaby fact sheet Paternal Exposures at <https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/paternal-exposures-pregnancy/>.

**Please click [here](#) for references.**

***National Pregnancy Registry for Psychiatric Medications: There is a pregnancy registry for women who take psychiatric medications, such as fluphenazine. For more information you can look at their website: <https://womensmentalhealth.org/research/pregnancyregistry/>.***

**Questions? Call 866.626.6847 | Text 855.999.3525 | Email or Chat at [MotherToBaby.org](https://MotherToBaby.org).**

---

Disclaimer: MotherToBaby Fact Sheets are meant for general information purposes and should not replace the advice of your health care provider. MotherToBaby is a service of the non-profit Organization of Teratology Information Specialists (OTIS). *OTIS/MotherToBaby encourages inclusive and person-centered language. While our name still contains a reference to mothers, we are updating our resources with more inclusive terms. Use of the term mother or maternal refers to a person who is pregnant. Use of the term father or paternal refers to a person who contributes sperm.* Copyright by OTIS, July 1, 2022.