Calcium Carbonate and Pregnancy

In every pregnancy, a woman starts out with a 3-5% chance of having a baby with a birth defect. This is called her background risk. This sheet talks about whether exposure to calcium carbonate may increase the risk for birth defects over that background risk. This information should not take the place of medical care and advice from your health care professional.

What is calcium carbonate?

Calcium carbonate is a dietary supplement used to increase calcium in your body. Calcium is needed for healthy bones, muscles, nervous system and heart. Also, calcium carbonate is used as an antacid to relieve heartburn, acid indigestion and upset stomach. Calcium carbonate comes in different forms, including tablet, chewable tablet, capsule, and liquid. It can also be an ingredient in other over the counter products.

I just found out I am pregnant. Should I stop taking calcium carbonate?

You should always talk with your health care provider before making any changes in your medication. When taken as directed, recommended doses of calcium carbonate have not been associated with any known risk during pregnancy.

Can use of calcium carbonate during pregnancy cause birth defects?

Studies have shown that women taking calcium carbonate during the first three months of pregnancy are at no greater risk to have a baby with a birth defect. In fact, taking calcium carbonate as recommended at any time during a pregnancy has not been associated with adverse effects.

What are the dangers of taking too much calcium carbonate?

The Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) of calcium for pregnant and breastfeeding women is 1,000 mg. The use of calcium carbonate in more than the recommended amount can lead to lower fetal weight, and has been associated with milk-alkali syndrome. Milk-alkali syndrome is caused by increased levels of calcium in the blood. This might lead to the breakdown of calcium in other body tissues, and may cause kidney failure.

Can I use calcium carbonate while breastfeeding?

Calcium is found in breast milk, and when used in recommended doses, not thought to be harmful to a nursing baby. If excess calcium is needed for the production of milk, it will come from your body lowering the calcium excreted through urine and mobilization from bone. Be sure to discuss all your options for breastfeeding with your healthcare provider.

What if the father of the baby takes calcium carbonate?

There are no studies looking at possible problems with conceiving or risks to a pregnancy when the father takes calcium carbonate. In general, a father’s exposures are unlikely to increase the risks to a pregnancy. For more information, please see the OTIS fact...
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Selected References:


If you have questions about the information on this fact sheet or other exposures during pregnancy, call OTIS at 1-866-626-6847.