

Louisiana Pharmacists Association

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Louisiana Pharmacists Association Educates Patients about Over-the-Counter Medication
Use During Pregnancy**

Over-The-Counter Medications Can Help Relieve Pregnancy-Related Symptoms

If you are pregnant or planning to get pregnant, there are steps you can take for a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby. Many women experience symptoms during pregnancy that can interfere with daily activities. Common pregnancy-related conditions include nausea/vomiting (morning sickness), constipation, hemorrhoids, headache, and heartburn/acid reflux. These conditions are easily managed using over-the-counter (OTC) medications **after consulting with a pharmacist or physician**. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about two-thirds of women in the U.S. take one or more medications during pregnancy.

Not all OTC Drugs are Safe During Pregnancy

Although over-the-counter medications are useful and readily available, many are not safe to use during pregnancy. When a woman is pregnant, everything that she ingests has the possibility of crossing the placenta and reaching the fetus. This is important because, just like vital nutrients, drugs can be transferred to the developing fetus as well.

The FDA regulates medications to ensure their general safety, but these studies often do not involve pregnant patients due to the possible risk to the mother and baby. For this reason we do not have enough information about many medications' use during pregnancy.

Are Herbals or Dietary Supplements Safe To Use During Pregnancy?

Herbals and dietary supplements have little safety information available regarding any group of patients. Therefore it is not recommended for any pregnant patient to use these products unless directed by a physician.

What about Breastfeeding?

Just like a mother passes nutrients to her fetus through the placenta, a mother passes nutrients to her newborn child through breast milk. Drugs and other supplements can be transferred in breast milk as well. It is important to tell your pharmacist and physician if you are breast-feeding or plan to breast-feed once your child is born.

Your Pharmacist Can Help You Choose the Right OTC Medications

If you are experiencing pregnancy-related symptoms, talk to your pharmacist today about managing these symptoms. Pharmacists are trained to help you choose the right medications that are safe for you and for your baby. They will work with your physician to ensure that you have a healthy pregnancy. The most important thing to remember is to consult with your physician before taking any drugs, whether prescription or over-the-counter.

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The Louisiana Pharmacists Association, established in 1882, strives to promote the interests of all pharmacists of the State of Louisiana. For more information about the LPA and its benefits, contact Julie Fuselier or Phyllis Perron, LPA Co-Executive Directors at 225/346-6883 or visit our website at www.louisianapharmacists.com.

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