

February 2021

Dear Doctor,

A new review has been published highlighting the risks associated with some of the most commonly prescribed anti-epileptic medications during pregnancy.

While it is well established that valproate carries a high risk for babies exposed to the drug during pregnancy, evidence has shown that other epilepsy medications also carry a risk of physical abnormalities and neurodevelopmental delay.

Anti-epileptic Drugs: review of safety of use during pregnancy has been published by the Medicines and Healthcare products Agency (MHRA) who are urging all prescribers **to discuss these risks with women and girls as part of their annual review and to refer any woman who is planning a pregnancy to a specialist to discuss her treatment options.**

As always, it is vitally important that no woman or girl should stop taking her medication but that, wherever possible, she should be prescribed those medications which are shown to have the safest profile during pregnancy. Any woman planning a pregnancy should also be prescribed 5mg per day of folic acid before becoming pregnant.

You can read the full report at gov.uk/government/publications/public-assesment-report-of-antiepileptic-drugs-review-of-safety-of-use-during-pregnancy

It is important that women and girls are prescribed the medications that will give them optimum seizure control but that will also carry the least possible risk for any future babies.

Yours sincerely



Professor Ley sander
Medical Director, Epilepsy Society

