



American College of
Obstetricians & Gynecologists

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ACOG Affirms Safety and Benefits of Acetaminophen during Pregnancy

The following is a statement from Steven J. Fleischman, MD, MBA, FACOG, president of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG):

“Suggestions that acetaminophen use in pregnancy causes autism are not only highly concerning to clinicians but also irresponsible when considering the harmful and confusing message they send to pregnant patients, including those who may need to rely on this beneficial medicine during pregnancy.

“Today’s announcement by HHS is not backed by the full body of scientific evidence and dangerously simplifies the many and complex causes of neurologic challenges in children. It is highly unsettling that our federal health agencies are willing to make an announcement that will affect the health and well-being of millions of people without the backing of reliable data.

“In more than two decades of research on the use of acetaminophen in pregnancy, not a single reputable study has successfully concluded that the use of acetaminophen in any trimester of pregnancy causes neurodevelopmental disorders in children. In fact, the two highest-quality studies on this subject—one of which [was published in JAMA](#) last year—found no significant associations between use of acetaminophen during pregnancy and children’s risk of autism, ADHD, or intellectual disability.

“The studies that are frequently pointed to as evidence of a causal relationship, including the latest systematic review released in August, include the same methodological limitations—for example, lack of a control for confounding factors or use of unreliable self-reported data—that are prevalent in the majority of studies on this topic.

“Acetaminophen is one of the few options available to pregnant patients to treat pain and fever, which can be harmful to pregnant people when left untreated. Maternal fever, headaches as an early sign of preeclampsia, and pain are all managed with the therapeutic use of acetaminophen, making acetaminophen essential to the people who need it. The conditions people use acetaminophen to treat during pregnancy are far more dangerous than any theoretical risks and can create severe morbidity and mortality for the pregnant person and the fetus.

“When considering the use of medication in pregnancy, it’s important to consider all potential risks along with any benefits. The data from numerous studies have shown that acetaminophen plays an important—and safe—role in the well-being of pregnant women.”

To learn more, see ACOG’s [frequently asked questions on acetaminophen in pregnancy](#).

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