

9 Drugs Which Affect Your Fertility - 12-16-2013

by Iva Keene MRMed. ND. - Qualified Naturopathic Physician - Natural Fertility Prescription - <https://natural-fertility-prescription.com>

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You have to be careful when it comes to taking drugs (whether prescription or non-prescription) whenever you're [trying to conceive](#). Some medicines, although seemingly harmless—like several common over-the-counter medicines—may negatively impact your fertility and make it more difficult for you to get pregnant. Because of this, you must always tell your doctor that you are trying to get pregnant and double-check with him/her if the drug they want to prescribe is safe for fertility. If it's not, get well first before trying to conceive or look into natural alternatives to treat your condition. You need to be in the best health at the time of conception for the best outcome for you and your baby.

How Do Drugs Affect Your Fertility?

The drugs you take affect your fertility in a couple of ways. In men, some prescription medication can alter sperm parameters; they can decrease sperm count, sperm motility and even alter sperm morphology. In women, drugs can delay ovulation and also affect how the uterus or endometrium becomes receptive to the fertilized egg. When you take medications that do these things, you may be decreasing your chances of getting pregnant.

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So, what medication can affect fertility? Here is a list of drugs you should think twice about taking if you are trying to conceive, along with our recommendations for natural alternatives to these medicines:

1. Antibiotics

According to one [study](#), antibiotics can interfere with the production of sperm. Some examples of antibiotic drugs which affect your fertility are:

- Minocin
- Nitrofurantoin
- Sulfasalazine
- Aminoglycosides

Can antibiotics affect female fertility? Yes! In women, [antibiotic use predisposes to yeast infections](#) and can interfere with fertile mucus production. This specifically applies to broad-spectrum antibiotics such as the following:

- Ampicillin
- Amoxicillin
- Augmentin

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- Keflex

Recommendation: Always use probiotics when you need to take antibiotics. Take probiotics a few hours after taking antibiotics. Strengthen your immune system with zinc, selenium, vitamins A, C and E, eat fresh garlic, ginger, onions, lemons and horseradish on a weekly basis to keep your immunity strong.

2. Antidepressants

SSRIs (Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors) have libido lowering effect on both men and women. Apart from this, these meds may also do the following to you:

- predispose to erectile and ejaculatory dysfunction
- reduce the duration of fertile mucus
- [lower sperm counts](#)
- interfere with hormone balance
- increase prolactin levels and
- suppress ovulation (tricyclic antidepressants)

Also, according to one study involving over 5,000 women, pregnant women who took antidepressants (SSRIs particularly) had a higher risk for miscarriage. Another study determined that taking certain antidepressants during pregnancy increased the likelihood of miscarriage by 68%. **Recommendation:** Depending on the severity of depression, you may be able to treat depression naturally. High doses of Omega 3's – especially DHA, B group vitamins and the herb St. John's Wort have been shown to help alleviate mild forms of depression. Exercise is another great way to boost your serotonin levels as is spending time in nature and sunlight.

3. Antihistamines

Because they can interfere with fertile mucus production, antihistamines should be avoided around ovulation time. This especially applies to the following antihistamines:

- Benadryl
- Zyrtec
- Claritin
- Allegra
- Chlor Trimeton.

Recommendation: You've probably heard the adage “an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure”. In this case, this is so true — you should identify what you are allergic to and avoid coming into contact with those substances while trying to conceive so you won't have to take antihistamines.

4. Anti-inflammatories

NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) and COX-2 inhibitors [can stop ovulation](#), reduce fertile mucus and predispose to LUFs (luteinizing unruptured follicle syndrome), or the condition where the egg

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is not released from the follicle. When the egg is not released, there is no ovulation and thus no egg for the sperm to fertilize. The drugs which belong to this group of anti-inflammatories are:

- Ibuprofen
- Advil
- Aleve
- Motrin
- Vioxx
- Celebrex

Recommendation: Omega 3's – especially the EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid) is anti-inflammatory as are turmeric, cat's claw and ginger. Use these natural and effective natural painkillers instead of the above anti-inflammatory drugs if you can.

5. Clomiphene

Although used as an infertility drug for women with PCOS and other forms of infertility, Clomiphene actually lowers your estrogen levels, decreases the amount of fertile cervical mucus you are producing and [decreases your chance of conception](#) for up to 6 weeks post its use. Considered an overprescribed drug for infertility and many experts agree that clomiphene monotherapy [should not be used in patients](#) with unexplained infertility. **Recommendation:** Optimize your natural fertility for at least four months first before trying to conceive and use natural options first before resorting to fertility drugs.

6. Cough Medication

This medication is designed to dry up mucus wherever it is produced in the body. It is not selective and therefore will also dry up your cervical mucus — this especially applies to pseudoephedrine and phenylephrine. You would want to avoid any mucus-drying medication since a dry cervical mucus is not conducive for pregnancy as this would make it difficult for the sperm to swim and reach the egg. **Recommendation:** There are some wonderful herbs for treating dry and productive cough. Eating horseradish can also break up thick mucus. Additionally, you must avoid products like dairy and soy as they are mucus producing.

7. High Blood Pressure Medication

These meds can [lower sperm counts](#), cause [erectile and ejaculatory dysfunction](#), increase prolactin and suppress ovulation. This especially applies to calcium channel blockers whose generic name ends in “dipine” and ACE inhibitors. **Recommendation:** High blood pressure needs to also be managed holistically with diet, lifestyle and stress management.

8. Migraine Medication

Ergots and triptans should be avoided. They can predispose to reduced blood flow to the uterus, which can interfere with implantation or predispose to miscarriage. Also, according to one study, the results of studies for the safety of the use of these medicines during pregnancy are [inconsistent and therefore](#)

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inconclusive.Recommendation: Since migraines are complex and often have specific triggers, try to avoid external triggers as much as possible when trying to get pregnant. Natural therapies manage migraines in the long term, especially hormonal imbalance-triggered ones.

9. Ulcer Medication

Taking ulcer medication lowers sperm count in men, increases prolactin and can stop ovulation in women.**Recommendation:** Your naturopath can prescribe an effective natural treatment for healing the ulcer and preventing new ones from forming.*For more information on drugs and their effect on fertility, check out our blog [Causes of Infertility— Common Drugs & Conditions](#)

Do Fertility Pills Really Work? Are They Safe to Use?

Fertility drugs may be able to assist in improving reproductive function. In women, they are used to stimulate ovulation and in some cases are also used for treating male infertility. Fertility drugs are also prescribed for various medical conditions like PCOS (polycystic ovarian syndrome), endometriosis, premature ovarian failure and low sperm count. Although these fertility pills are effective for some, natural treatments for your fertility should be your priority, since all drugs come with risks and various side effects that may have unfavorable effects on your health. For more information on fertility drugs, their uses and their potential health effects, please see our blog [Fertility Drugs—Are they Right for You?](#).

Takeaway

If you are already on prescription medication, it is unwise to discontinue your treatment without first speaking to your doctor who prescribed the medication. Some meds need to be gradually reduced over time before you can stop taking them altogether to prevent adverse reactions. Always use an integrative medical approach to get the best results and the best of both the natural medicine and conventional medical approach. What are your thoughts on prescription medication and their effects on fertility? Would love to hear from you.

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