

Use of Acetaminophen In Pregnancy Tied To AD/HD

AMA – American Medical Association News (Feb 25-2014)

One major television network, two major newspapers, Internet media outlets and consumer medical websites cover a study suggesting an association between expectant mothers' use of acetaminophen during pregnancy and an increased risk for attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder in their children. All of the sources note that acetaminophen has long been thought to be safe for use during pregnancy.

On [NBC Nightly News](#) (2/24, story 2, 1:10, Williams), medical editor Nancy Snyderman, MD reported on a study that found use during pregnancy of acetaminophen has been tied to an “increased risk of having a child diagnosed with” attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD).

[USA Today](#) (2/25, Painter) reports that the research, which was published online Feb. 24 in JAMA Pediatrics, is “likely to prompt concerns among women who have been told that the medication – found in Tylenol and many other pain and fever remedies – is safe during pregnancy.”

The [Los Angeles Times](#) (2/25, A1, Healy) reports that in the study of some 64,000 mothers in Denmark and their youngsters, “researchers found that kids whose mothers took the painkiller at any point during pregnancy were 29% more likely to be diagnosed with AD/HD than were kids whose mothers took none.” Notably, “the risk increased the most – by 63% – when acetaminophen was taken during the second and third trimesters, and by 28% when used in the third trimester alone.” When taken just during the first trimester, however, “the added risk was 9%.”

According to the [Cleveland Plain Dealer](#) (2/25, Townsend), an accompanying editorial cautioned that “the study’s findings should not prompt anyone to stop taking acetaminophen for its designed use.” The editorial pointed out that the findings “underline the importance of not taking a drug’s safety during pregnancy for granted, and they provide a platform from which to conduct further related analyses exploring a potential relationship between acetaminophen use and altered neurodevelopment.”

The [Huffington Post](#) (2/25, Pearson) reports, “The findings join a small but growing body of research – some of it led by the same researchers on the new study – linking acetaminophen use during pregnancy with health issues such as increased asthma risk in children and undescended testes in boys.” One study “published in November linked mothers’ frequent Tylenol use (at least 28 total days) during pregnancy with children’s decreased motor and communication skills as well as behavioral issues.”

Also covering the story are the [CBS News](#) (2/25, Jaslow) website, the [NBC News](#) (2/25, Fox) website, the [Time](#) (2/25, Park) “Healthland” blog, the [CNN](#) (2/25, Yanes) “The Chart” blog, [Forbes](#) (2/25, Walton), the [FOX News](#) (2/25, Kwan) website, [HealthDay](#) (2/25, Thompson), [Medscape](#) (2/25, Brooks), and [AFP](#) (2/25).