

## Trusted voice: Paracetamol in pregnancy

SIGN Council is committed to ensuring that healthcare professionals, patients and the public are provided with the best evidence for practice.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has published a [reminder that taking paracetamol during pregnancy remains safe](#).

MHRA, the regulatory body for the UK, the [Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists](#) (RCOG) and [BUMPS](#) (Best use of medicines in pregnancy) agree that paracetamol remains the recommended pain relief during pregnancy when used as directed.

### MHRA advice for healthcare professionals:

- there is no evidence that taking paracetamol during pregnancy causes autism in children
- pregnant women should be advised to continue to follow [existing NHS guidance](#) and speak to their healthcare professional if they have questions about any medication during pregnancy
- untreated pain and fever can pose risks to the unborn baby, so it is important that patients continue to manage these symptoms with the recommended treatment. If pain or fever does not resolve, patients are advised to seek advice from their healthcare professional
- patients should not swap to alternatives such as ibuprofen. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as ibuprofen, are generally not recommended during pregnancy
- the MHRA regularly reviews the safety of paracetamol including during pregnancy to ensure that the benefits to the patient and unborn baby outweigh any risks
- recent existing studies do not show a causal association between paracetamol use during pregnancy and autism. There are many potential contributing factors in the development of autism, including but not limited to concomitant diseases and family inheritance
- members of the public and healthcare professionals are encouraged to report any suspected side effects from medicines, including paracetamol, to the MHRA's [Yellow Card scheme](#)

## **MHRA advice for healthcare professionals to provide to patients:**

- paracetamol is recommended as the first-choice pain reliever for pregnant women, used at the lowest dose and for the shortest duration. It can also be used to treat fever
- pregnant women should be advised to continue to follow [existing NHS guidance](#) and speak to their healthcare professional if they have questions about any medication during pregnancy
- untreated pain and fever can pose risks to the unborn baby, so it is important that patients continue to manage these symptoms with the recommended treatment
- patients should not swap to alternatives such as ibuprofen, as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) are generally not recommended during pregnancy

## **Contributors**

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Note for editors:

The Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN) is the national clinical guidelines agency for Scotland and produces evidence-based guidelines for use in NHSScotland. SIGN Council has over 30 members from medical royal colleges, including RCOG, and professional bodies representing pharmacy, midwifery, nursing and AHPs as well as lay and patient representatives.