



Welcome to Edition 3 of the Medication Safety Group Newsletter. This edition focuses on safe prescribing in pregnancy in response to a number of Drug Safety Updates highlighting teratogenicity following exposure to certain medicines. There are a number of workstreams underway within BLMK ICS—a key area of focus is the Valproate Pregnancy Prevention Programme, which aims to ensure patients are informed and protected from becoming pregnant whilst taking valproate.

A useful [patient guide](#) has been developed which outlines the key points in relation to the programme. Pregnancy Prevention forms should be reviewed and signed annually and filed in the patients notes.

Safe Use of Medicines in Pregnancy

Drugs should be prescribed in pregnancy only if the expected benefit to the mother is thought to be greater than the risk to the foetus, and all drugs should be avoided if possible during the first trimester as this is when major organs are developing.

An absence of information does not imply safety.

BNF Recommendation: Drugs should be prescribed in pregnancy only if the expected benefit to the mother is thought to be greater than the risk to the foetus, and all drugs should be avoided if possible during the first trimester as this is when major organs are developing. *Drugs which have been extensively used in pregnancy and appear to be usually safe should be prescribed in preference to new or untried drugs; and the smallest effective dose should be used.*

The [UKTIS website](#) and [BUMPS website](#) provide evidence based safety information on the use of medicines in pregnancy, including patient information leaflets. UKTIS also conduct surveillance of medicines in pregnancy and suspected adverse events can be reported to them via the site.

UKTIS are also able to provide advice to healthcare professionals via telephone:



MHRA Drug Safety Updates:

[Topiramate \(Topamax\): start of safety review triggered by a study reporting an increased risk of neurodevelopmental disabilities in children with prenatal exposure](#)

[A new study has suggested pregabalin may slightly increase the risk of major congenital malformations if used in pregnancy.](#)

[Metformin in pregnancy: study shows no safety concerns](#)