

**BEDFORDSHIRE, LUTON AND MILTON KEYNES AREA
PRESCRIBING COMMITTEE**

**PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH -
GUIDANCE FOR GPs**

The attached Guidance sheet written by GP mental health spotlight champions is to provide BLMK GPs with information about managing medication for women who have mental health issues when they are pregnant or breastfeeding. The document has been approved by the BLMK Prescribing Committee, March 2022.

Version 3, April 2023

Review, April 2025



Prescribing in Pregnancy and Breastfeeding

- ◆ The BNF provides only limited information regarding prescribing in these groups. Specialist resources should always be used, to avoid undertreatment of medical conditions due to unfounded safety concerns.
- ◆ The UK Teratology Information Service <http://www.uktis.org/> - search by drug. If further information is needed, healthcare professionals can contact UKTIS by telephone on 0344 892 0909.
- ◆ BUMPS (Best Use of Medicines in Pregnancy) is the patient info site for UKTIS <https://www.medicinesinpregnancy.org/>
- ◆ The GP Infant Feeding Network website links to some excellent sites for safe use of medication whilst breastfeeding: <https://gpifn.org.uk/prescribing-information/>

Perinatal Mental Health

- ◆ There is a high risk of relapse of mental illness if medications are stopped in the perinatal period (any time from conception to 1 year postpartum).
- ◆ Suicide is a leading cause of death in the perinatal period.
- ◆ Untreated perinatal mental illness also has long-term effects on the child.
- ◆ The best time to consider the safety of these medications is prior to pregnancy so this should form part of the routine discussion when prescribing for anyone of childbearing age. In most cases we can reassure that they should not stop the medication in the event of pregnancy.
- ◆ Please seek specialist advice, especially **before stopping** medications in the perinatal period.
- ◆ Patients should be referred to the Perinatal Mental Health Team (referral forms are on Arden's/SystemOne). You can speak to a Duty Clinician on 01234 263642 or email the team elft.blperinatal@nhs.net.
- ◆ The RCGP has developed an online toolkit. <https://www.rcgp.org.uk/clinical-and-research/resources/toolkits/perinatal-mental-health-toolkit.aspx>
- ◆ Further support and training for GP practice teams on all aspects of perinatal mental health is available from BLMK's two GP Spotlight Champions. To arrange this, please contact hannahhill@nhs.net (Luton) or rahhiel.riyat@nhs.net (Beds and MK).