

# Developing a systematic approach to safer medication use during pregnancy



In 2013, CDC held a meeting of experts to discuss the best methods for evaluating the safety of medications used to manage health conditions during pregnancy. Learn more key topics that were discussed below.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Background

Medication use in pregnancy is common and increasing. However, little is known about medication safety during pregnancy because most medications have not been well studied in pregnancy. Therefore, many healthcare providers and women struggle to make the best treatment decisions to manage health conditions during pregnancy.

To promote safer medication use in pregnancy, CDC, in partnership with other federal agencies and academic experts, drafted a review method to:

- Evaluate the quality and strength of available evidence for risks associated with medications used to treat health conditions during pregnancy, and
- Develop guidance to be shared with healthcare providers and women that promotes safer medication use in pregnancy.

### Objectives

CDC convened a meeting of experts in January 2013 to consider best methods for promoting safer medication use in pregnancy, including methods to:

- Prioritize health conditions for review
- Conduct systematic reviews
- Develop evidence-based guidance
- Share guidance with healthcare providers and women

### Participants

Participants included subject matter experts from many different specialties, including healthcare providers, pharmacists, experts in genetics and fetal development, and researchers who study medication use in pregnancy. Participants represented several federal agencies, academic and medical institutions, and professional and non-profit organizations.

### Conclusions

Meeting participants agreed on the need for an expert review panel to prioritize, synthesize, evaluate, and disseminate evidence on the safety of medications used to treat health conditions in pregnancy. The panel could:

- Increase the availability of reliable information that women and healthcare providers can use when making treatment decisions,
- Continue and expand collaboration between all stakeholders, including federal agencies, professional societies, and public health and clinical organizations, and
- Promote safer medication use in pregnancy.

**Reference:** Broussard CS, Frey MT, Hernandez-Diaz S, Chambers CD, Greene MF, Sahin L, Collins Sharp BA, Honein MA. Developing a systematic approach to safer medication use during pregnancy: Summary of a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-convened meeting. *Am J Obstet Gynecol.* 2014. (in press)