

RA & PREGNANCY: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

It Helps to Know What to Expect During Pregnancy

70% of Women with RA Experience Improved Symptoms

For years, women with rheumatic disease have been discouraged and/or advised not to get pregnant. We now know that with careful medical and obstetric management most women can have a successful pregnancy. If your patient(s) with rheumatic disease are considering pregnancy here are a few guidelines of what women should know about pregnancy and rheumatic disease.

01 | Know the Effects

Pregnancy affects each patient differently; therefore, it is imperative that you speak to your health care provider regarding how pregnancy can affect you and your treatment. Also, discuss the possible side effects that medications can have on your baby.

02 | Know the Facts

- Rheumatic diseases often affect women during their childbearing years, when pregnancy is an expected event.
- Diseases with the potential to affect the kidneys, especially lupus and antiphospholipid syndrome (APS), are more likely to affect pregnancy outcome than others.
- Rheumatic symptoms may change during pregnancy. Symptoms often return shortly after delivery.
- Treatment and medication(s) seldom change due to possible side effects.

03 | Arm Yourself with the Right Team

Arm yourself with the right team of doctors including your Obstetrician and Rheumatologist. Speak to all of your doctors and have a discussion of what other

medical professional may need to be included in your care, including pre and post pregnancy.

Both doctors and patients must be ready to deal with and plan for possible complications for both mother and child.

04 | Prenatal Care Counts

The best way to ensure a healthy pregnancy and healthy baby is the same whether you have rheumatic disease or not. Like all pregnant women, you should:

- Eat a healthy diet.
- Gain the recommended amount of weight.
- Exercise (if allowed by your doctor).
- Avoid tobacco and alcohol.
- Get regular prenatal care.

For additional resources on pregnancy and rheumatic disease visit: www.rheumatology.org

Did You Know?

Many patients with Rheumatic Disease experience symptom improvement during pregnancy

References

https://www.rheumatology.org/Practice/Clinical/Patients/Diseases/And_Conditions/Pregnancy_and_Rheumatic_Disease/

<http://www.webmd.com/rheumatoid-arthritis/features/ra-pregnancy>