

Pregabalin in Patients of Childbearing Potential

In April-22, the MHRA highlighted findings from a study on [the risks of pregabalin during pregnancy](#). Using pregabalin during pregnancy can risk major congenital malformations and patients should continue to use effective contraception during treatment and avoid use in pregnancy unless clearly necessary.

Primary Care Clinician may wish to implement the alert in the following way:

- All patients of childbearing potential taking a teratogenic medication should be on effective contraception.
- Identify ALL patients taking pregabalin (brand names Alzain, Axalid, Lecaent, Lyrica, plus generic versions) that are of childbearing potential.
- Where possible do not initiate prescribing of pregabalin for patients of childbearing potential, especially for pain management. There are other options available.
- Review existing childbearing patients taking pregabalin with a view to deprescribe for pain management. Any deprescribing of pregabalin should involve the patient, considering pros and cons to facilitate shared decision-making process and management plan going forward.
- If the patient wishes to continue to prescribe pregabalin, despite the risks explained to them, this should be clearly documented in their records.
- Clear management plan should be documented in the records.
- Not all women of childbearing potential are sexually active and not all sexually active women of childbearing potential are heterosexual.
- Where the benefit of continuing pregabalin is considered to outweigh the risks, the patient should be advised to be on long-term effective contraception.
- Patients at risk of pregnancy who do not agree to long-term contraception may require specialist input.

MHRA have provided advice on [Medicines with teratogenic potential: what is effective contraception and how often is pregnancy testing needed?](#) Within this document is an [aide memoire](#) which provides advice on the most common contraceptive methods and frequency of pregnancy testing.

A face-to-face or telephone review with patients is recommended, rather than sending a letter.

MHRA have produced a [leaflet](#) for women who are taking or considering to take pregabalin and some of the main points for patients include:

- Continued use of effective contraception during treatment.
- If planning to have a baby, it is important to discuss treatment options with your healthcare professional before stopping contraception.
- If pregnant or need advice while taking pregabalin, talk to the healthcare professional who prescribes pregabalin for you.
- Untreated epilepsy, pain, or anxiety could be harmful to you and your unborn baby. It is important that you talk to your healthcare professional before stopping pregabalin or making any changes to your usual medicines.

Best use of medicines in pregnancy (BUMPS) mirrors MHRA advice. This can be found [here](#).

Many teratogenic medications are used for various conditions and through shared decision making, counselling and information, some patients are able continue to access these treatments safely.