

### Drugs during Pregnancy and Lactation, 2nd edition

Schaefer C, Peters PWJ, Miller RK, editors. Academic Press, Elsevier, London (UK), 2007. 904 pages. ISBN 978-0-444-52072-2. US\$49.95.

Evaluating the safety of drugs in pregnancy or lactation is a challenge that most clinicians will face at some time in their careers. Nearly all women need some type of drug therapy while pregnant or while breastfeeding. Pharmacists who care for women who are in their reproductive years may be presented with such questions on a daily basis. In fact, a pharmacist may be the first health care professional to encounter a patient when she discovers she is pregnant, or the pharmacist may be called upon by a physician to recommend safer treatment choices for pregnant and lactating patients.

This second edition of *Drugs during Pregnancy and Lactation* is a welcome update to an already thorough reference. Its original editor (Schaefer), the 2 new editors (Peters and Miller), and all of the contributors are well regarded in the fields of teratology or drugs in lactation (or both). Many continue to counsel patients regularly as part of their clinical practice or within a teratology information service.

This textbook is divided into 2 main sections. About two-thirds of the book is dedicated to drugs in pregnancy, the remainder to drug use during lactation. The first chapter gives a brief introduction to embryology and outlines the basic principles of drug use in pregnancy, including pharmacokinetics, fetal effects, and risk communication. The latter part of the book begins with a general commentary on breastfeeding and the excretion of drugs into maternal milk. Following their respective introductions, each section of the book contains a number of chapters covering various therapeutic areas. The chapters summarize the pharmacology of the drugs used in that therapeutic area, summarize their toxic effects as they relate to pregnancy or breastfeeding, and report on the excretion of the drug into milk. In addition to the major therapeutic areas that are covered, the editors have included chapters on vaccines, vitamins and minerals, herbs, diagnostic agents and procedures, recreational drugs, poisonings, and occupational or environmental exposures.

Readers looking for a dictionary of drugs and their reproductive risks may be disappointed. Instead, by dividing the book into therapeutic areas, the editors have created an ideal resource for clinicians who are searching for the most suitable treatment option for a pregnant or lactating patient with a particular condition. Nevertheless, when the precise drug in question is already known, readers can easily locate the summary for a particular drug by referring to the exhaustive index. Drugs are listed by their generic (chemical) names, generally the European name followed by the North

American terminology. It is clear that the editors have geared this text to a worldwide audience, and as such, trade names are not used. Instead, readers are advised to consult their local pharmacopoeia for brand names.

The individual drug summaries are thorough but brief, objectively presenting the available evidence. Wisely, the authors do not present the pregnancy risk categories of the US Food and Drug Administration (A, B, C, D, and X), as these have been the subject of criticism for some time. Instead, each class of drugs is followed by a grey "recommendation" box, which concisely summarizes the drug class in plain language. The preferred and alternative treatment choices are suggested, and recommendations for follow-up are also made. A table inside the front cover of the book and on a laminated pull-out card summarize these recommendations in chart format for quick reference. The appendices of the book provide listings for teratology information services and breastfeeding support resources around the world where readers can seek out further information.

Although certain online resources, such as Teris (<http://depts.washington.edu/terisweb/teris/>) and Reprotox (<http://www.cehn.org/cehn/resourceguide/reprotox.html>), may be better able to provide the most current evidence, because they can be updated in a more timely fashion, they are also generally unaffordable for an individual clinician and may not be readily available in all settings. In today's milieu, when both time and financial resources are limited, pragmatic and succinct texts such as this are invaluable and worthy of a spot on the bookshelf of any health care practitioner who advises pregnant or lactating women.

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### Stockley's Drug Interactions Pocket Companion, 2007

Baxter K, editor. Pharmaceutical Press, London (UK). 2007. ISBN 10 0 85369 701 9. Softcover, 522 pages. Price: US\$45.

*Stockley's Drug Interactions Pocket Companion, 2007* provides concise, accurate, and clinically relevant information to pharmacists about drug interactions. As a pocket companion, it is conveniently sized and designed for quick and easy access to information. It contains over 1250 interaction monographs pertaining to specific drugs or drug groups, including extensive sections on drug-herb, drug-alcohol, and

