



WOMEN'S HEALTH

Anti-Convulsant Drugs And Birth Defects

(NAPSA)—Pregnant women know to carefully monitor what they put in their bodies, but what if the medicine you need to take might hurt your baby?

It's a problem that the more than 2 million women of child-bearing age who take anti-convulsant medication may have to face. The medication is used to treat epilepsy, certain psychological disorders and migraines, among other ailments.

One recent study looked at the effect of anti-epileptic drugs (AEDs) on birth defect rates. It found that a drug called Valproate posed the greatest risk to fetuses, but that other AEDs posed risks as well. The good news is that women with epilepsy have a variety of treatment options. To learn about these options, talk to your doctor and consider attending a Women and Epilepsy one-day educational forum or check out a forum online.

The forums are intended to educate participants on the many issues that impact women living with epilepsy and their families. Their focus will be on providing women with epilepsy and their families critical information relating to health care, education and family support. In addition, the educational forums offer an opportunity for women with epilepsy and their families to meet and



Pregnant women with epilepsy should talk to their doctors about their anti-convulsant drugs.

share experiences with others dealing with similar issues.

Check www.epilepsyfoundation.org for forum dates and locations and information on the November online forum.

There are also other steps pregnant women can take. They include talking with a health care provider as soon as you know you are pregnant, taking folic acid before and during pregnancy and staying up-to-date on anti-convulsant news.

As a final tip, all pregnant women who take anti-convulsants are encouraged to enroll in the North American Antiepileptic Drug Pregnancy Registry at www.aedpregnancyregistry.org or at (888) 233-2334.