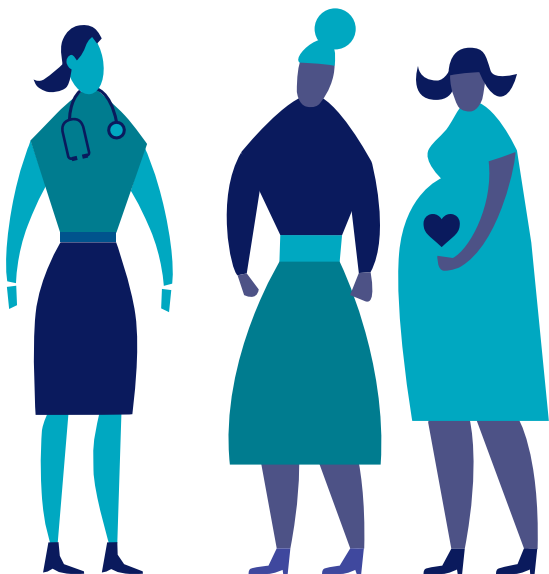


# Medicines for epilepsy, mental health, and pain can harm your unborn baby

Talk to your doctor about the risks to you and your baby, and how to balance them

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**If you could be pregnant,  
get in touch with your  
doctor urgently**

**Keep taking your  
medicines until you've  
talked to your doctor**

**Use two kinds of  
contraception unless  
you plan to get pregnant**

Make an appointment with  
your doctor if you could get  
pregnant or are planning a  
pregnancy, and you're taking  
any of these medicines

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**Find out more at [www.facsnz.com](http://www.facsnz.com)**

## **What to ask your doctor**

- What should I do if I want to get pregnant – can I cut down, stop, or change my medicine?
  - What else should I do to reduce the risks to me and my baby?
  - Who will coordinate my medical care through my pregnancy?
  - What specialist care am I entitled to while pregnant?
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## **Taking these medicines has both benefits and risks**

These medicines help many people stay well and live well, and most people who take them when they're pregnant will have a healthy baby.

### **Risks to an unborn baby**

- Higher risk of a baby with spina bifida, cleft palate, and heart defects.
- Higher risk of a child with learning difficulties or autism.

### **Risks if you stop taking your medicines**

- If you have epilepsy, serious seizures could put you and your baby at risk.
- If you have bipolar disorder, your symptoms could come back, and you could get very ill once the baby's born.

## Medicines for epilepsy, mental health, and pain can harm your unborn baby

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*This information is intended to provide guidelines and general advice to healthcare professionals, but should not be used as a substitute for assessment with the circumstances that are relevant to the individual patient.*



Te Kaporeihana Āwhina Hunga Whara



MANATŪ HAUORA



HEALTH QUALITY & SAFETY  
COMMISSION NEW ZEALAND  
*Kupu Taurangi Hauora o Aotearoa*