

Can the use of SSRI's (anti-depressants) cause a child's birth defect?

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Yes. The extremely popular family of anti-depressant drugs known as serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRI's) have been causally connected with the development of [birth defects in children](#) who's mother's have taken the drugs during pregnancy. Woman who take SSRI's such as: Zoloft, Paxil, Przac, Lexapro or Errexor during the term of their pregnancy have an increased risk of delivering a child with profound birth defects relating to:

- Protruding organs (Omphalocele)
- Facial deformities (Craniosynostosis)
- Distorted limbs
- Heart defects, including: atrial septal defects (ASD) an ventral septal defects (VSD)
- Spinal deformities
- Chairi malformation

While the medical community is still in the process of evaluating the the causal relationship between the use of SSRI's and a wide-range of birth defects, early studies clearly indicate the SSRI usage and birth defects have more than a mere incidental correlation.

One of the more respected studies establishing the causal connection between SSRI usage and birth defects arises out of a study published in The New England Journal of Medicine. The NEJM article established that babies born to mothers' taking SSRI had a higher incidence of a serious cardiopulmonary disorder known as Persistent Pulmonary Hypertension (PPHN) compared with newborns born to mothers not taking the drugs.

The mounting complaints of birth defects associated with SSRI use has prompted the the Food and Drug Administration to categorize SSRI use during pregnancy to the family of Category C drugs which have demonstrated harm to the developing fetus.

The legal rights of injured children

Given the severity of the birth defects associated with SSRI's use and the fact that most manufacturers failed to warn consumers about the potential problems, a number of lawsuits have already been against the drug makers. In the case of popular SSRI– Paxil– is manufacturer GlaxoSmithKline has already paid more than \$1 billion in settlements to approximately 800 claimants.

If you were prescribed an SSRI during pregnancy and believe that your child has a birth defect related to the drug, you may have legal rights to recover damages on behalf of your child from the pharmaceutical maker or even the physician prescribing the drug.

