

chapter 67

Drug Use During Pregnancy and Lactation

Objectives

AFTER STUDYING THIS CHAPTER, THE STUDENT WILL BE ABLE TO:

1. Discuss reasons for avoiding or minimizing drug therapy during pregnancy and lactation.
2. Describe selected teratogenic drugs.
3. Discuss guidelines for drug therapy of pregnancy-associated signs and symptoms.
4. Discuss guidelines for drug therapy of selected chronic disorders during pregnancy and lactation.
5. Discuss the safety of immunizations given during pregnancy.
6. Teach adolescent and young adult women to avoid prescribed and over-the-counter drugs when possible and to inform physicians and dentists if there is a possibility of pregnancy.
7. Discuss the role of the home care nurse working with the pregnant mother.
8. Discuss drugs used during labor and delivery in terms of their effects on the mother and newborn infant.
9. Describe abortifacients in terms of characteristics and nursing process implications.

Critical Thinking Scenario

Thirty-eight-year-old Susan Williams comes in for her first prenatal visit. Susan works as a corporate lawyer and is married to a university professor. Susan is very excited about this planned pregnancy, but seems somewhat anxious as she asks lots of questions.

Reflect on:

- ▶ The effects of drug use by the mother on the fetus during pregnancy.
- ▶ Do you make any assumptions about Susan's knowledge level based on her profession and social class?
- ▶ How might such judgments assist you to individualize teaching? How might such judgments impair the teaching process?
- ▶ Essential information to provide Susan regarding the use of any prescription, nonprescription, or herbal drugs during pregnancy.

OVERVIEW

Drug use during pregnancy and lactation requires special consideration because both the mother and the fetus or nursing infant are affected. Few drugs are considered safe, and drug use is generally contraindicated. However, many pregnant or lactating women take drugs for various reasons, including acute disorders that may or may not be associated with pregnancy, chronic disorders that require continued treatment during pregnancy or lactation, and habitual use of nontherapeutic drugs (eg, alcohol, tobacco, others). The main purpose of this chapter is to describe potential drug effects on

the fetus and maternal drug therapy to protect the fetus while providing therapeutic effects to the pregnant woman.

PREGNANCY AND LACTATION

Pregnancy is a dynamic state: Mother and fetus undergo physiologic changes that influence drug effects. In the pregnant woman, physiologic changes alter drug pharmacokinetics (Table 67-1), and drug effects are less predictable than in the nonpregnant state. Most of the drugs in this chapter are described elsewhere; they are discussed here in relation to