

DRUG INFORMATION

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SAFETY OF ALUMINIUM IN EARLY PREGNANCY

Question:

What is the safety of using the topical antiperspirant, aluminium chloride 20% solution, during early pregnancy?

Answer:

We could find no reports discussing the safety of topical use of any aluminium salts during pregnancy^[1-4]. We could also find little information regarding the safety of oral aluminium during pregnancy^[1-4]. Parenterally administered aluminium chloride increased the incidence of congenital abnormalities in rats but not mice^[5]. The relevance of animal data to humans is unknown. We note that the skin is reported to be an excellent barrier to absorption of aluminium and that the little that is absorbed is efficiently eliminated by the kidneys^[6]. Toxicity usually arises only if renal function is impaired or if the natural barriers are bypassed^[6].

Conclusion:

We are not aware of any information on the extent of absorption of aluminium, or on human teratogenicity of aluminium. While animal data suggest that in some species teratogenic effects may result if aluminium is administered parenterally during pregnancy, we believe the risk to the foetus is likely to be minimal. However, due to the lack of information it would be prudent to re-assess the need for aluminium chloride solution in pregnancy.

References:

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4. Embase online database 1988-2002 (accessed December 2002).
5. Schardein JL. Chemically induced birth defects (2nd ed), 1993.
6. Dukes MNG, Aronson J. Meyler's Side Effects of Drugs (14th ed), 2000.

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