

## Wellbutrin linked to dangerous side effects



**ANTIDEPRESSANT**

**Taken During Pregnancy.....**

**Linked to Risk of Having a Baby with a HEART DEFECT**

Have you or a loved one taken **WELLBUTRIN?**  
**CLICK HERE to determine if you qualify for compensation.**

The advertisement features a blue background with a white heartbeat line. On the right side, there is a white bottle of Wellbutrin XL 300mg extended-release tablets. The bottle label includes the text: 'ONCE-DAILY Wellbutrin XL bupropion hydrochloride extended-release tablets 300 mg'. Below the bottle, two white tablets are shown, one of which has 'WELLBUTRIN XL 300' printed on it.

Pregnancy can be a stressful affair for many women. The fluctuating hormonal levels as well as the obvious physical changes that the female body goes through during the various trimesters may result in a depressive state setting in.

Wellbutrin is often prescribed to pregnant women to counter any possible depressive moods. However, Wellbutrin has been found to have side effects that may lead to the newborn child(ren) having birth defects when taken by the expecting mother.

### **What is Wellbutrin (bupropion)**

Wellbutrin is a psychotropic drug that is prescribed for treating major depressive disorder and seasonal affective disorder. It has been manufactured and marketed by GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) since 1985. It is typically not the first choice of psychiatrists for suppressing the symptoms of depression in pregnant women. Thus, Wellbutrin is usually prescribed to pregnant women when they are not responding well to other conventional treatments involving tircyclic and SSRI antidepressants such as Pamelor and Zoloft. Another factor for its preference for pregnant women is that side-effects concerning weight gain are less common.

Wellbutrin's generic name is bupropion and works by affecting the way that certain chemicals in the brain, called neurotransmitters, transmit messages. Many in the psychiatric community believe that bupropion, or Wellbutrin, works by correcting an unbalance of chemicals in your brain, such as dopamine and serotonin. These substances have a mood uplifting affect and their reuptake by the brain after they have been released is prevented by psychotropic drugs such as Wellbutrin

### **Wellbutrin Birth Defects**

Information regarding birth defects that have been linked to the use of Wellbutrin by pregnant women has come out from the data compiled in GSK's own Bupropion Pregnancy Registry. The following birth defects have been found to be associated with the use of Wellbutrin during the first trimester.

#### **Heart defects**

Taking Wellbutrin during the first trimester of pregnancy has been associated with the development of certain heart defects among newborn infants. Termed as left outflow tract defects, their likelihood was determined by researchers working at the Sloan Epidemiology Center of Boston University. This finding was in connection to a much larger ongoing Birth Defects Study being conducted at the research center.

A positive connection between Wellbutrin use during the early pregnancy period and heart defects was also reported in the American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology. Researchers worked with data collected on a total of 12,722 infants. The analyses revealed that the chances of left outflow tract heart defects increased twofold in cases when the pregnant woman is taking Wellbutrin in the period starting a month before conception and till 3 months after it. The findings were published in the AJOG's July 2010 Volume 203, Issue 1.

#### **Craniosynostosis**

Craniosynostosis is the term given to a birth defect that causes the gaps between the bony plates of a baby's skull to close prematurely. Normally these gaps or sutures close when the child has attained an age of 2 to 3 years and his or her head has acquired a rounded form. Thus this birth defect results in an infant's head to have an abnormal shape.

The June 2007 issue of The New England Journal of Medicine reported in the findings of a study conducted by Alwan et al. that there was an association found between the

use of SSRIs such as Wellbutrin and Paxil by pregnant women in the first trimester and the occurrence Craniosynostosis.

## **Omphalocele**

This birth defect causes various organs of the abdomen to protrude through the belly button. Since abdominal parts such as the liver, spleen and the intestines are only covered with a thin tissue-based layer, they are clearly visible when they are sticking out in the navel area.

The study by Alwan et al. also found an association between maternal use of SSRIs such as bupropion and paroxetine in the first 3 months of pregnancy and omphalocele.

## **Basis for a Wellbutrin Birth Defects Lawsuit**

Reports in the media regarding the recall of a particular form of Wellbutrin serve as a red flag. In October 2012, Forbes reported that the FDA had determined that the 300 mg version of Wellbutrin was ineffective. It was also reported that initially the FDA had only approved the lower 150 mg dosage version of Wellbutrin and the one with the higher dose was marketed by the drug maker without specific approval.

The mixed reports regarding the safety and efficacy of Wellbutrin are grounds enough for filing a [Wellbutrin birth defects lawsuit](#). Your case will be further supported by scientific research that has been published regarding the links between Wellbutrin the aforementioned birth defects.

## **Making a Case**

Wellbutrin (Bupropion) has been classified as a Pregnancy Category C drug by the FDA. All drugs that fall into this category have demonstrated a damaging effect on the fetus during animal reproductive studies. Furthermore, Pregnancy Category C drugs have not been put through any well-controlled human trials and are prescribed despite potential risks to unborn babies.

If you or your loved one has experienced birth-defects such as those related to the heart, skull or abdomen in their newborn and used Wellbutrin during the pregnancy period, you should typically be eligible to file a lawsuit against the drug's maker and distributor. If you refer your case to an attorney that is experienced in filing lawsuits related to Wellbutrin birth defects, you can increase your chances of receiving

compensation against the expenses and suffering that you and your child have experienced and may do in future as well.