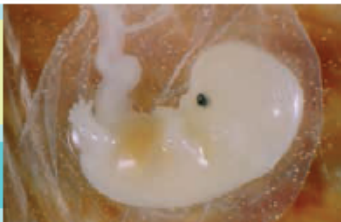


week 5

The embryo is still tiny – about the size of an apple pip – but is growing very quickly.

Make sure you're taking a folic acid supplement (see page 6).



The heart and blood vessels are just beginning to form.

Your breasts may feel tender, as if you are starting your period.

Medicine and your pregnancy

Any drug may affect you or your baby, and that includes those you get on prescription, products you buy over the counter and some herbal remedies.

Prescribed drugs and over-the-counter medicines

You should tell your GP and midwife you're pregnant if you're being prescribed any medication, and also check with the pharmacist if it's OK to take it when you're pregnant. Check the label for yourself as well.

If you have a condition that means you take prescription drugs all the time, for example for epilepsy or cardiac problems, it is very important to talk to your GP and midwife or specialist when you are planning to get pregnant, or as soon as possible if the pregnancy was unplanned. You should **not** stop taking prescribed drugs without advice from your GP.

Epilepsy and pregnancy

The good news is that most women with epilepsy will have a straightforward pregnancy and deliver a healthy baby. If you have epilepsy it is important that you contact your epilepsy specialist nurse (your GP can advise you how to do this), ideally before you become pregnant or as soon as possible if the pregnancy was unplanned. It is recommended that most women with epilepsy who are hoping to start a family should be prescribed folic acid tablets – usually 5mg daily. You should start taking folic acid when you stop

contraception or start trying to get pregnant and continue taking it for at least the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. If you smoke there is lots of help and support to help you quit. Particularly for women with epilepsy, those who do not smoke have fewer pregnancy complications and healthier babies.

Unless you are advised otherwise, you should keep taking your anti-epileptic medication while you are pregnant. This gives you the best chance of controlling seizures. Stopping medication suddenly can put women with epilepsy and their unborn baby at risk. Your neurologist, epilepsy specialist nurse, obstetrician or GP will talk to you about your epilepsy medication. Epilepsy support is also available from Epilepsy Connections on 0141 248 4125.

Sodium valproate and valproic acid

Sodium valproate (Epilim®/Episenta®/Epival®) and valproic acid (Convulex®) are associated with a higher risk of problems. These may be prescribed for epilepsy or for other conditions such as mental health conditions or migraine. If you are prescribed one of these the risks and benefits will be discussed with you and you will be supported to reach a decision. You can find more information at www.medicines.org.uk/emc/RMM.421.pdf