

Good news on multiple sclerosis and pregnancy

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There is good news for women with multiple sclerosis (MS) who are pregnant or thinking about becoming pregnant. A new study shows that pregnant women with multiple sclerosis are only slightly more likely to have cesarean deliveries and babies with a poor prenatal growth rate than women who do not have MS.

Plus, the women with MS were no more likely to have other pregnancy problems, such as preeclampsia and other high [blood pressure](#) problems and premature rupture of membranes, than women in the general population. The study is published in the November 18, 2009, online issue of *Neurology*, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology.

The large study used a national database from all non-federal short-stay hospitals in 38 states. The data included an estimated 18.8 million deliveries, with about 10,000 of those occurring in women with MS.

The women with MS were more likely than women without chronic medical conditions (2.7 percent for women with MS compared to 1.9 percent for women without chronic medical conditions) to have a fetus with intrauterine growth restriction, defined as a weight less than the tenth percentile for the gestational age, as measured by ultrasound. Women with MS were more likely to have a cesarean delivery than those in the general population (42 percent versus 33 percent).

"These results are reassuring for women with MS," said study author

Eliza Chakravarty, MD, MS, of Stanford University School of Medicine in Stanford, CA. "Women and their doctors have been uncertain about the effect of MS on pregnancy, and some women have chosen to delay or even avoid pregnancy due to the uncertainty. We found that women with MS did not have an increased risk of most [pregnancy complications](#) ."

Chakravarty said that previous studies on MS and pregnancy have focused on the impact of [pregnancy](#) on disease activity.

The study also looked at women who had diabetes prior to becoming pregnant (not [gestational diabetes](#)), and found that they had higher rates of complications than women with MS and high rates of complications in areas where the [women](#) with MS did not have increased rates.

Source: American Academy of Neurology ([news](#) : [web](#))

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