Today’s piece was prepared by Jessica Hauser, MD, based on a Seattle Times article [Tylenol during pregnancy linked to kids’ behavioral problems](http://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/tylenol-during-pregnancy-linked-to-kids-behavioral-problems/).

The article discusses findings of newly published analyses suggesting a relationship between acetaminophen use during pregnancy and subsequent behavioral problems in childhood. The article conveys a thoughtful and unbiased review of a study published in JAMA Pediatrics in which researchers analyzed data from the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (ALSPAC), a prospective birth cohort from Avon, England with over seven thousand pregnant women enrolled in the early 1990s.

The researchers found maternal use of acetaminophen at 18 and 32 weeks of pregnancy was associated with increased likelihood of maternal report of problematic behaviors when children were 7 years old. Specifically, they examined links between behavioral problems and (1) prenatal maternal use, (2) postnatal maternal use, and (3) partner use of acetaminophen. They demonstrated that these findings were unlikely to be explained by social or genetic factors. The results suggest that fetal exposure to acetaminophen may increase the risk of neurodevelopmental problems. The Seattle Times article rightly points out that an association is not an indication of causation and that more studies are needed to elucidate the mechanism or causal explanation of these findings. Notably, the original study did not include information regarding dose, frequency or reasons mothers used acetaminophen.

Taking into consideration the widespread use of acetaminophen among pregnant women, these findings may suggest adding acetaminophen to the long cautionary list of medications to avoid during pregnancy. However, the study did not address the potential harm of not treating fever or pain in the mother and how this may affect fetus health or childhood behavior. Future studies should address this before any recommendations are made regarding whether to take acetaminophen during pregnancy.

**RESOURCES ON MEDICATION USE DURING PREGNANCY:**

[Tobacco, Alcohol, and Drug use during pregnancy](http://www.acog.org/Patients/FAQs/Tobacco-Alcohol-Drugs-and-Pregnancy) *Guidelines of the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG). Does not include a statement about acetaminophen*

***Reference***

Stergiakouli E, Thapar A and Smith GD. Association of acetaminophen use during pregnancy with behavioral problems in childhood: evidence against confounding. *JAMA Pediatr.*, Aug 2016; Epub ahead of print. PMID: [27533796](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/27533796) DOI: [10.1001/jamapediatrics.2016.1775](http://dx.doi.org/10.1001/jamapediatrics.2016.1775)

And that’s today’s Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics: IN THE NEWS!