



health

Department:
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Reference: 2025/11/10/EDP/01

CIRCULAR – PARACETAMOL USE DURING PREGNANCY

On 28 September 2025, the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) issued a clarifying statement to the effect that paracetamol “remains a safe and recommended option for the relief of pain and fever during pregnancy, when used short-term at recommended doses”. SAHPRA confirmed that there is currently no evidence that using paracetamol during pregnancy causes either attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or autism.

Following the release of the statement by SAHPRA, the Ministerially appointed National Essential Medicines List Committee (NEMLC) has deliberated on the question of safety of paracetamol use during pregnancy and are in agreement with the statement issued by SAHPRA.

Accordingly, NEMLC has advised that no changes are needed to the current standard treatment guidelines for pain, at primary healthcare or hospital levels of care. NEMLC also underscored the value of the advice provided by SAHPRA, that:

- Pregnant women and those planning a pregnancy should be advised to use paracetamol only when needed and at the lowest effective dose for the shortest possible time.
- Untreated fever and pain may pose risks to the unborn baby, and it is therefore important to seek treatment if recommended by a healthcare professional.
- Pregnant women should consult a healthcare professional if pain or fever persists or if they have any concerns about medicine use during pregnancy.
- Pregnant women should also be advised to avoid combining paracetamol with other medicines without first seeking medical advice.

The statement issued by SAHPRA can be accessed here: <https://www.sahpra.org.za/news-and-updates/sahpra-clarifies-that-paracetamol-is-safe-to-use-in-pregnancy-at-recommended-doses/>

For any clinical queries, kindly email: SAEDP@health.gov.za.

Your co-operation in this regard is appreciated.

Kind regards

PROF M BLOCKMAN

**CO-CHAIR: NATIONAL ESSENTIAL
MEDICINES LIST COMMITTEE (NEMLC)
DATE: 10/11/2025**

DR R DE WAAL

**CO-CHAIR: NATIONAL ESSENTIAL
MEDICINES LIST COMMITTEE (NEMLC)
DATE: 10/11/2025**