

EXPLORING TYLENOL USE & AUTISM RISK

In September 2025, President Trump and members of his administration announced that the FDA will notify doctors that the use of Tylenol (acetaminophen) during pregnancy can be associated with an increased risk of autism development.

Did you know?...

- ➔ Martin A. Makary, the Commissioner of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), [said](#), “To quote the dean of the Harvard School of Public Health, there is a causal relationship between prenatal acetaminophen use and neurodevelopmental disorders of ADHD and autism spectrum disorder.”
- ➔ Several large-scale studies, including the Nurses’ Health Study II and Boston Birth Cohort, have [reported](#) associations between prenatal acetaminophen exposure and later autism or ADHD diagnoses. Johns Hopkins, and Mount Sinai have also echoed those concerns.
- ➔ Tylenol maker Kenvue [said](#) that it “strongly disagrees” that acetaminophen causes autism and said it is “deeply concerned about the health risks and confusion this poses for expecting mothers and parents.”



FDA’s 2014 Acetaminophen Limits Linked to Drop in Severe Liver Injuries, Study Finds

In 2014, the FDA limited the use of acetaminophen to prevent liver damage in users.

In March 2023, Weill Cornell Medicine [published](#) a news statement saying the acetaminophen limit was “significantly associated with subsequent reductions in serious liver injury, according to a study led by investigators at the University of Alabama and Weill Cornell Medicine.”

Tylenol Use And Autism Connections

Executive Summary

In September 2025, President Trump and members of his administration announced that the FDA will notify doctors that the use of Tylenol (acetaminophen) during pregnancy can be associated with an increased risk of autism development, which Tylenol manufacturer Kenvue “strongly” disagreed with.

There have been several studies into the possible links between acetaminophen usage during pregnancy which can increase the risk of a child developing autism, with several of these studies indicating a “strong evidence of an association” between acetaminophen use during pregnancy and autism, but the authors of many of these studies have said that only an association was demonstrated, not proof that acetaminophen caused autism.

In response to the Trump Administration’s announcement, several statements highlighting acetaminophen’s safety and lack of association with autism or ADHD were put forward to highlight that more research is needed on this subject. Despite this, Tylenol has previously tweeted that their medication shouldn’t be taken by those who were pregnant.

Additionally, the FDA has previously limited the use of acetaminophen to prevent liver damage in users, which led to a significant reduction in serious liver injury related to acetaminophen use.

Trump Announcement And Industry Response

In September 2025, President Trump and members of his administration announced that the FDA will notify doctors that the use of Tylenol (acetaminophen) during pregnancy can be associated with an increased risk of autism, which Tylenol manufacturer Kenvue “strongly” disagreed with.

- In September 2025, President Trump [announced](#) that the US Food and Drug Administration will notify doctors that the use of Tylenol during pregnancy can be associated with a “very increased risk of autism” The President said “They are strongly recommending that women limit Tylenol use during pregnancy unless medically necessary,” such as to treat fever, “if you can’t tough it out.”
- Martin A. Makary, the Commissioner of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), [said](#), “To quote the dean of the Harvard School of Public Health, there is a causal relationship between prenatal acetaminophen use and neurodevelopmental disorders of ADHD and autism spectrum disorder.”
- Tylenol maker Kenvue [said](#) Monday that it “strongly disagrees” that acetaminophen causes autism and said it is “deeply concerned about the health risks and confusion this poses for expecting mothers and parents.” “Acetaminophen is the safest pain reliever option for pregnant women as needed throughout their entire pregnancy,” the company said in a statement. “Without it, women face dangerous choices: suffer through conditions like fever that are potentially harmful to both mom and baby or use riskier alternatives. High fevers and pain are widely recognized as potential risks to a pregnancy if left untreated.”

Studies Indicating An Association Between Acetaminophen And Autism

Studies published in the past several years have indicated evidence of an association between acetaminophen use during pregnancy and autism, but with further research recommended.

- In August 2025, a BMC Environmental Health Study which [analyzed](#) studies on acetaminophen use during pregnancy and developmental disorders, including six studies which examined acetaminophen use and autism. The analysis [concluded](#) there was a “strong evidence of an association” between acetaminophen use during pregnancy and autism, but the authors said that only an association was demonstrated, not proof that acetaminophen caused autism.
- In September 2025, the HHS press release [highlighted](#) research showing autism rates climbing, with 1 in 31 children born in 2014 now diagnosed, nearly five times higher than in 2000.
- Several large-scale studies, including the Nurses’ Health Study II and Boston Birth Cohort, have [reported](#) associations between prenatal acetaminophen exposure and later autism or ADHD diagnoses. Johns Hopkins, and Mount Sinai have also echoed those concerns.
- In the 2020 PubMed study [pointed](#) to in the HHS press release, the HHS notes a study of nearly 1,000 mother-infant pairs and [found](#) that higher levels of acetaminophen metabolites in a baby’s umbilical cord blood at birth are linked with increased risk of being diagnosed later with ADHD, autism spectrum disorder (ASD), or both.
- Children whose cord blood acetaminophen burden was in the middle or highest third had [roughly](#) 2-3 times the odds of ADHD, and 2-4 times the odds of ASD, compared with those in the lowest third.

Pushback From The Medical And Scientific Field That More Research Is Needed

In response to the Trump Administration’s announcement, several statements highlighting acetaminophen’s safety and lack of association with autism or ADHD were put forward to highlight that more research is needed on this subject.

- A 2024 peer-reviewed Swedish study published in JAMA that [included](#) more than 2 million children found no association between acetaminophen taken in pregnancy and autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or other neurodevelopmental disorder.
- Dr. Susan Kressly, president of the American Academy of Pediatrics, said in a [statement](#) that “Regarding autism, we know it is complex, highly variable and increasingly linked to genetics.”
- [Kressly](#): “There is no single, root cause of autism, and there is no single medication that will give every autistic child or adult what they need. Individualized plans, often involving a combination of developmental, behavioral, educational and social-relational strategies, can help improve outcomes that are meaningful to individuals and families. We also need and welcome additional investments in federally funded research to better support families of autistic children.”
- Acetaminophen, or paracetamol, is [considered](#) a safe over-the-counter option for pain or fever during pregnancy. Other common pain relief options like ibuprofen or regular-dose aspirin can increase the risk of serious pregnancy complications, according to experts.

FDA Mandate To Reduce Acetaminophen Led To Reduction In Liver Damage

The FDA has previously limited the use of acetaminophen to prevent liver damage in users, which led to a significant reduction in serious liver injury related to acetaminophen use.

- In 2014, The FDA [implemented](#) a mandate to limit the dosage of acetaminophen in pills that combine acetaminophen and opioid medications to prevent liver damage in adults and children 12 years of age and older.
- In March 2023, Weill Cornell Medicine [published](#) a news statement saying the acetaminophen limit was “significantly associated with subsequent reductions in serious liver injury, according to a study led by investigators at the University of Alabama and Weill Cornell Medicine.”

Comment from 2017

In March 2017, Tylenol [posted](#) on their X account that “We actually don't recommend using any of our products while pregnant. Thank you for taking the time to voice your concerns today.”