

Ibuprofen may affect fertility of unborn girls

Chris Smyth Health Editor

Taking ibuprofen in the first three months of pregnancy could harm the future fertility of a woman's unborn daughters, a study suggests.

The research is not conclusive and scientists said there was no need to shun pain relief.

Past studies have linked paracetamol and ibuprofen to damage to babies' reproductive systems. The latest research looked at how ibuprofen affected the cells that become ovarian follicles.

Samples from 185 foetuses at under 12 weeks of pregnancy showed that tissue exposed to ibuprofen had half the number of ovarian germ cells, the study in the journal *Human Reproduction*, said.

Séverine Mazaud-Guittot, who led the research at Inserm in Rennes, France, said: "Girls are born with a finite number of follicles in their ovaries and this defines their future reproductive capacity."

She said that follicles could probably recover from brief exposure to ibuprofen, but added: "We found that two to seven days of exposure dramatically reduced the germ cell stockpile... and the ovaries did not recover fully from this."

Dan Hawcutt, senior lecturer in paediatric clinical pharmacology at the University of Liverpool, said that the number of "extra" eggs women are born with would compensate for this.

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