

Mothers-to-be warned over paracetamol

RESEARCH HAS FOUND PROLONGED

paracetamol use by pregnant women may reduce testosterone production in unborn baby boys.

Some male reproductive health problems could be affected by their mother's use of the over-the-counter painkiller in the gestational period.

Reduced testosterone exposure in the womb can be linked to fertility problems, testicular cancer and undescended testicles.

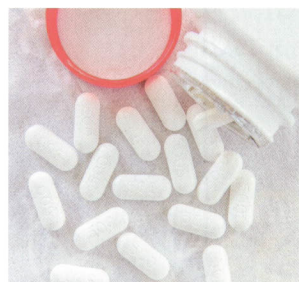
Authors of the study suggest that paracetamol, the main pain reliever used

during pregnancy, should be used at the lowest dose and for the shortest possible time.

This echoes existing guidance on the use of the pain-killing medicine.

Researchers at The University of Edinburgh studied the effect of paracetamol on testosterone production in mice.

Although they found there was no effect on testosterone production following 24 hours of paracetamol treatment, after seven days of exposure, the amount of testosterone was reduced by 45 per cent.



UK ranked 26th for maternal wellbeing

A REPORT BY SAVE THE

Children has found UK mothers are worse off than those from countries including Slovenia, Israel and Singapore.

The annual Mothers' Index assesses indicators of maternal wellbeing, such as mother and child health, education and economic status from 179 countries.

The UK ranked 26th, lagging behind Scandinavian countries such as Norway, Finland and Denmark, which dominate the top 10.

The under-5 mortality rate in the UK is 4.6 per 1,000 live births, among the lowest in the report. However, the lifetime

risk of maternal death is one in 6,900. This is higher than countries such as Macedonia (one in 10,200), Poland (one in 19,800) and Slovakia (one in 10,200).



Hidden peanut allergy in asthmatic children

MORE THAN HALF OF

children with asthma who tested positive for sensitivity to peanuts were unaware of their allergy in a recent study.

Preliminary findings from an ongoing study presented at the American Thoracic Society annual conference found, of 1,517 children with asthma, 22 per cent were also allergic to peanuts.

However, 53 per cent of these had absolutely no knowledge of their allergy to the legume.

Exposure to peanuts can cause anaphylactic shock in those who have the allergy, which in severe cases can be fatal.

It is therefore important families are aware of the risks



and moderate their diet to avoid the allergen.

The risk of peanut allergy is higher in children with asthma, or those who have other allergies such as egg allergy or eczema.

Cannabis use before puberty could stunt growth in teens

SMOKING MARIJUANA BEFORE

puberty could cause boys to be up to four inches shorter than those who do not use the drug.

A study of more than 400 boys by scientists in Pakistan compared hormone levels of those who smoked cannabis with those who did not.

They found hormones that affect the onset of puberty, including testosterone and luteinising hormone, were far higher in boys that regularly took cannabis.

However, hormones responsible for growth were lower in the regular marijuana users.

By the age of 20, those who did not take the drug were an average of 4.6 inches taller than those who did.

They also weighed around four kilos more than the regular cannabis users.

It is estimated around 250,000 youngsters in England aged 11-15 took the drug in 2013.