

# **Drug, Alcohol, and Tobacco Use During Pregnancy: Brief Version**

## **Is it harmful to use drugs, alcohol, or tobacco when I'm pregnant?**

Drugs, alcohol, and smoking can harm your body and your brain. If you are pregnant, these things can pass from you to your baby. They can cause big problems for your baby. If you abuse drugs or alcohol, or if you smoke while you are pregnant, you are at risk for:

- Miscarriage
- Premature labor
- Stillbirth
- Giving birth to a child with birth defects

## **Illegal drugs**

Illegal drugs are a danger to you and your baby. Even if you just use drugs once in awhile, you are putting your health and your baby's health at risk.

If you are addicted, your baby can be born addicted. Your baby will then go through withdrawal.

It's best not to use drugs at all while you are pregnant. That can be hard to do by yourself. If you need help, talk to your healthcare provider.

## **Medicines**

Talk to your healthcare provider about all medicines you take. Be sure to tell anyone who prescribes medicine for you that you are pregnant.

Some medicines are harmless. Others could hurt your baby. Check with your healthcare provider before you use any natural remedy or nonprescription medicine, such as:

- Fever and pain medicine
- Antacids
- Sleeping pills
- Cold and cough medicines
- Medicines to treat diarrhea

Coffee, tea, chocolate, some soft drinks, and some medicines have caffeine in them. To be on the safe side, limit the caffeine you have each day to less than 2 cups of coffee.

## **Alcohol**

While you are pregnant, drinking alcohol is not safe for your baby. Everything you eat and drink goes to the baby. The more you drink, the greater the danger to your baby.

Alcohol use can cause babies to:

- Have small heads and heart defects
- Not grow as they should
- Have learning problems

Do not drink while you are pregnant. It may not be easy. If you need help, talk to your health care provider.

## **Smoking**

When you smoke, less oxygen gets to you and your baby. This makes it harder for you to have a healthy pregnancy.

- You may have a miscarriage.
- Your baby may be born too small or too early.
- Your baby could have learning problems or other health problems later on.
- Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) happens more often in babies whose mothers smoke.

If you are a smoker, try to stop now. Ask your healthcare provider for help to stop smoking.

Developed by RelayHealth.

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