

CAN I SMOKE OR CONSUME MARIJUANA WHILE PREGNANT? HERE'S THE FACTS.

In several states marijuana may be legal to possess, smoke, or consume recreationally or medicinally. Being a "natural" drug, marijuana enthusiasts claim a lot of health benefits, and its use has become more accepted in the last few years. 35 million people in the United States use marijuana monthly, and 59% of Americans support legalization of marijuana for recreational and medical use.

The increased use of marijuana comes with negative consequences. 1 in 10 people become addicted to marijuana. Also, marijuana use in young women who are pregnant has risen. Many women mistakenly believe that since marijuana is legal in some areas, and used medically, that it is safe to use while pregnant.

However, marijuana's effects on pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers is still being researched and is largely unknown. What is known? It is NOT healthy for your baby and negatively impacts their development all the way through the teenage years. Marijuana directly affects memory, learning, attention, decision making, coordination, emotions, and reaction time.

THE RISKS

of Marijuana Use While Pregnant



- Lower birth weight
- Preterm birth
- Miscarriage
- Placenta complications
- Fetal growth restriction
- Stillbirth
- Brain Development issues related to: problem solving, memory, and hand-eye coordination
- Higher chance of developing ADD and ADHD

FACTS

10% of the THC taken reaches the fetus

Stillbirth risk is 2.3 times greater with marijuana consumption

THC remains in the bloodstream for an average of 30 days

RESOURCES

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA):

www.samhsa.gov

National Institute on Drug Abuse:

www.drugabuse.gov

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

www.cdc.gov/pwud/substance-treatment.html

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Marijuana Myths

Myth: It is more natural and healthier to consume marijuana edibles to manage morning sickness than to take something prescribed by a doctor.

Truth: Eating or drinking a product containing marijuana carries more risk, including poisoning and unintentional overdosing. In addition to THC, over 500 different chemicals are present when someone eats marijuana edibles. None of these chemicals' effects have been studied on the development of an unborn child, but prescriptions given by doctors have been proved both effective and SAFE for the development of an unborn child. A doctor may be able to suggest a proven alternative medicine as well, such as peppermint tea or ginger chews.

Myth: I'm not smoking it - so it's ok.

Truth: Eating marijuana products like cookies or brownies, or ingesting THC oils are just as bad as inhaling it in joint form. Edibles are more potent and longer lasting, giving chemicals more time to enter the bloodstream and pass through the placenta- the fetus' source for oxygen and nutrients.

Myth: It's perfectly fine to smoke marijuana after the baby is born.

Truth: Marijuana chemicals are transferred easily through breast milk because breast milk contains a large amount of fat. In fact, the more marijuana is used, the more it accumulates in breast milk with concentrations up to 8 times more than in the mother's own body!

What do the Experts Say?

The exact effects of smoking and consuming marijuana on unborn children is unknown. This is because it is not ethical to expose a fetus to unknown chemicals or dangers that may have negative effects on their lives for the purpose of testing. The American College of Obstetrics and Gynecologists and the American Academy of Pediatrics both advise pregnant women to avoid marijuana in any form. Their main concerns is with the amount of THC that can pass to the baby through the bloodstream, the effects on the baby's development and growth, and the long term effects on a child's mental and behavioral skills later in life.



What's the Harm?

Marijuana's psychoactive chemical is tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). THC is stored in fat cells and passed to your baby through the bloodstream. Because a developing baby's brain is mostly fat, THC affects the fetus for a longer period of time. Children that are exposed to marijuana while in the womb have significant outcomes on their brain development - making it harder for them to pay attention or learn. They test significantly lower in school, experience behavior issues such as hyperactivity, impulse control and difficulty with problem solving.

Furthermore, smoking marijuana while pregnant is just as bad as smoking a cigarette. In addition to inhaling mind-altering chemicals, users also inhale harmful carcinogenic substances that can cause miscarriage, preterm birth, SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome), stillbirth and physical defects. Just because marijuana is labeled as "natural" doesn't mean it is not harmful. Tobacco is a plant just like marijuana, and it causes 1,000 infant deaths a year. Also, marijuana produced today is much more potent than when it was in the 1970s, up to 70% stronger.

What Should I Do?

Don't smoke or eat marijuana or marijuana related products while pregnant or nursing. If you are having health issues, talk to a doctor about other options that are more likely to be effective and safe during pregnancy. Remember, your doctor is your partner and is committed to a safe, healthy pregnancy and delivery. However, a doctor may be required by law to report the use of marijuana while pregnant to authorities - even in states where it is legal.

Smoking or eating marijuana during pregnancy is bad for children in both the short and long-term, affecting intelligence, memory recall and motor functions. What a pregnant woman smokes and eats a baby also smokes and eats.

What If My Partner Smokes?

It is just as important to avoid second hand marijuana smoke as it is second hand cigarette smoke - the effects are just as harmful. Second-hand marijuana smoke can lead to an increased risk of respiratory infections, ear infections, asthma attacks and SIDS.

Ask your partner if they are ready to quit, and, if so, support them in this process. If not, set ground rules so they don't smoke around you.

The truth is, not much is known about using marijuana during pregnancy and nursing. What is known are the very negative effects on the brain development for fetus' and babies. Marijuana is a brain altering drug, and it will alter a user's and a baby's brain on a chemical level. Commit to giving your child the best start in life and avoid marijuana.



Help Your Baby Have a Healthy Start

Do not let your unborn child become a guinea pig. The safest way to avoid any complications with your pregnancy and your child's health is to avoid smoking and eating marijuana products.