

Get the Facts About Marijuana

Pregnancy, Breastfeeding and Marijuana Marijuana and Your Baby



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Breastfeeding is the natural and preferred way to feed your baby. It provides benefits to mother and child and should be the optimal feeding choice for most infants. Breastmilk contains appropriate amounts of carbohydrates, proteins, fats, minerals, and vitamins. Moreover, breastfeeding helps bonding between mother and child. Marijuana exposure while breastfeeding is not recommended. When a breastfeeding mother uses marijuana, THC (the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana) passes through the breast milk to the baby, potentially affecting the baby.¹

Overview

- When used during pregnancy or while breastfeeding, marijuana may interfere with your baby's brain development because their brains are growing rapidly during this time.
- Some of the potential long-term health effects to babies who are exposed to marijuana during pregnancy or while breastfeeding include the following: decreased growth, decreased IQ scores, decreased mental function, decreased academic ability, and attention problems.¹
- Marijuana smoke contains more than 150 chemical compounds, many of the same chemicals as tobacco, some of which can cause cancer. Once in your blood, many of these chemicals can be passed to your unborn or breastfeeding baby.

Marijuana And Pregnancy

- No matter how you use marijuana while pregnant (e.g., smoking, vaping, eating), the drug enters your blood and then passes to your baby.
- It is not recommended that you use marijuana to treat morning sickness or nausea; your health care provider can give you medicines that are safe to take during pregnancy.

Marijuana And Breastfeeding

- According to a 1982 study², delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the active ingredient in marijuana, is excreted into human breast milk in moderate amounts. Based on their findings, 0.8% of the weight-adjusted maternal intake of one joint or comparable consumable would be ingested by an infant in one feeding after smoking or consuming marijuana.

- Since infants exposed to marijuana via breast milk may show signs of sedation, reduced muscular tone, and poor sucking, your baby may have trouble nursing if your breast milk has marijuana in it.³

What You Can Do

- Avoid using marijuana while you are pregnant, breastfeeding, or trying to become pregnant. If you are using marijuana, or other drugs, including alcohol, be sure to protect yourself from an unplanned pregnancy.
- Talk to your health care provider if you are pregnant or breastfeeding and need help quitting marijuana.
- Never allow anyone to smoke marijuana near your children.
- Never allow anyone who is under the influence of marijuana to take care of your children.
- If you have marijuana in your home, make sure it is stored in a locked area that is out of reach of children.
- If your baby accidentally ingests marijuana, call the poison control hot line right away (1-800-222-1222); the call is free and you will be helped quickly. If your baby seems very sick, call 911 or go to an emergency room.

Additional Resources And References

Broad Review

- ¹CO Department of Public Health and Environment. Monitoring Health Concerns Related to Marijuana in Colorado. 2014. (See page 75) http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Director/Documents/marijuana/Monitoring_Health_Concerns_Related_to_Marijuana_in_Colorado_2014.pdf

Pregnancy

- National Institute on Drug Abuse. Can Marijuana Use During Pregnancy Harm the Baby? 2014. <http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/marijuana/can-marijuana-use-during-pregnancy-harm-baby>

Breastfeeding

- Journal of Toxicology. Cannabis and Breastfeeding. 2009. <http://www.hindawi.com/journals/jt/2009/596149/>
- ²Canadian Family Physician. 2005. Marijuana use and breastfeeding. <http://www.cfp.ca/content/51/3/349.full.pdf>
- ³Liston J. Breastfeeding and the use of recreational drugs--alcohol, caffeine, nicotine and marijuana. Breastfeed Rev 1998; 6: 27-30.