

CANNABIS USE IN PREGNANCY AND WHILE BREASTFEEDING

IS IT SAFE TO USE CANNABIS IN PREGNANCY?

- NO
- There is no known safe amount of cannabis use in pregnancy and when breastfeeding
- A woman who is planning pregnancy, pregnant, thinks she may be pregnant, or is breast feeding, should not use cannabis products.

IF MARIJUANA LEGAL IT'S PROBABLY SAFE, RIGHT?

- NO. Just because Cannabis legal doesn't make it safe. Just like pregnant women should not use alcohol, tobacco or certain medications, they should also not use cannabis. Although Cannabis is "natural", it is not necessarily safe.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE EFFECTS ON CONCEIVING?

- Cannabis use has been linked to changes in the menstrual cycle for women, and lower sperm count and poorer sperm quality in men
- Cannabis use may affect the ability to get pregnant

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS OF USING CANNABIS IN PREGNANCY?

- Possible increased risk of preterm birth
- Possible increased risk of low birth weight baby
- Lower alertness and slower growth of the new baby
- Long term effect on the child's brain development, behavior, and mental health
- Risks appear to be higher in women who also use tobacco or other substances
- More research needs to be done to further clarify these potential risks If you are unable to stop using cannabis completely, try decreasing the amount used, and use less often

LONG TERM EFFECTS ON CHILDREN AND TEENS

The effects of cannabis use during pregnancy are more common and more severe among children of heavier users

The newborn

- tremors, irritability, shorter feeds, sleepy baby In infancy
- decreased ability to self-soothe, along with exaggerated startles
- sleep disturbances

By age 3-6 years old

- poorer memory and verbal reasoning skills
- less attentive, easily distracted and more impulsive

By age 6-10 years old

- hyperactivity, impulsivity, inattention
- more difficulty in making decisions
- learning difficulties
- symptoms of depression and anxiety

By age 14-16

- reduced school performance
- delinquency problems
- continued hyperactivity, impulsivity, and inattention
- more likely to start trying and using cannabis and other substances

“I AM PREGNANT, AND USING CANNABIS REALLY HELPS WITH MY MORNING SICKNESS, HELPS ME SLEEP, AND HELPS MY PAIN... WHAT SHOULD I DO?”

Please speak with your health care provider regarding your concerns. Likely there are other methods of alleviating these symptoms that are safer.

WHAT ABOUT BREASTFEEDING?

When a breastfeeding mother uses cannabis, THC passes into the breast milk and is taken up by the baby's fat cells and brain. The THC can stay in the baby's body for weeks. Some research shows that babies exposed to THC through breast milk have slower motor development, decreased feeding times, and can be more sleepy.

Until further information about potential harms is available, it is recommended that women stop using cannabis while they are pregnant or breastfeeding.

RESOURCES

www.pregnancyinfo.ca