Marijuana Use & Your Baby

How Marijuana Affects Your Baby
No matter how you use marijuana (smoking, vaping, eating, or drinking), the active ingredient in marijuana, THC (tetrahydrocannabinol), will reach your baby in three ways:
- Through your bloodstream and into the placenta (the organ that feeds your baby during pregnancy).³,²
- Through your breast milk.³,⁴ “Pumping and Dumping” doesn’t work. THC is stored in fat cells and is slowly released over several weeks, so it stays in your breast milk.⁵
- Through secondhand smoke that enters your baby’s lungs.⁶,⁷

Marijuana Can Harm Your Baby
Research shows that if you use marijuana while you are pregnant or breastfeeding:
- Your baby may be born with a lower birth weight.⁸,⁹
- A low birth weight baby is more likely to have health problems, especially in the first year of life.¹⁰
- The growth and development of your baby’s brain can be harmed.¹¹,¹²

No Amount of Marijuana is Safe
Leading doctors’ organizations such as the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists¹³ and the American Academy of Pediatrics¹⁴ recommend that:
- If you already use marijuana and are pregnant or thinking about becoming pregnant soon, discontinue use. Talk to your primary care provider about alternative treatment options if needed.
- Don’t breathe cannabis smoke if you are pregnant. It is bad both for you and your baby because, like tobacco smoke, it lowers your oxygen levels, introduces toxins into your system and harms your lungs.¹⁵,¹⁶

Currently, possession or use of marijuana is illegal in Nebraska. There is no medical marijuana program allowances for patients in Nebraska. Consuming marijuana (cannabis, weed, pot, etc.) can affect the health of your baby and is not recommended for women who are pregnant, breastfeeding, who plan to become pregnant soon, or are caring for a child. If you are using marijuana as self-medication, talk to your primary care provider about alternative treatment options for your underlying conditions. Here are some important facts you should know.

How Marijuana Use Impacts Your Ability to Care for Your Baby
- Using marijuana can make people feel very sleepy when they are high, and this may affect how a parent interacts with their child.
- Caregivers may not be fully aware of the infant’s basic needs such as when they are hungry, need a diaper change, or just want to be cuddled.
- Opportunities to play or read to your baby may be missed. These activities are a very important way that children begin to learn about the world around them.
- It is not safe to drive while high. Do not drive high or let your baby ride in a car if the driver is high.

Modified from California Department of Public Health, “Let’s Talk Cannabis; Pregnant and Breastfeeding Women and Cannabis”. Last Updated August 29, 2019
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References


For more information about breastfeeding, visit: HealthyLincoln.org/Breastfeeding

Modified from California Department of Public Health, “Let’s Talk Cannabis; Pregnant and Breastfeeding Women and Cannabis”. Last Updated August 29, 2019