

## Have more questions?

Talk to your prenatal care and/or pediatric provider about any questions you may have.

## Need help quitting?

Call the Moms in Recovery/Dartmouth-Hitchcock Addiction Treatment Program at (603) 653-1860 or visit [nhtreatment.org](http://nhtreatment.org) to find a treatment center near you.

## Who We Are

The Moms in Recovery/Dartmouth-Hitchcock Perinatal Addiction Treatment Program provides support and treatment for pregnant and parenting women with substance use disorders.

If you have questions or would like more information about our services, contact us at (603) 653-1860 or visit our website at:

**[dartmouth-hitchcock.org/psychiatry/  
perinatal-addiction-treatment.html](http://dartmouth-hitchcock.org/psychiatry/perinatal-addiction-treatment.html)**

Original content developed collaboratively by members of Dartmouth-Hitchcock's Obstetrics and Gynecology, Pediatrics and Psychiatry teams and their patients.

# Risks of Marijuana Use During Pregnancy and Breastfeeding



# What you eat, smoke and drink during pregnancy and after birth passes to your baby through your placenta and breastmilk.

## How can marijuana harm my baby while I'm pregnant?

Marijuana contains a chemical called THC, which makes the user feel high. THC crosses the placenta from the mother to the baby's bloodstream. While its exact effects are not completely understood, THC may change the way your baby's brain grows and develops, including problems with learning during childhood. Smoking marijuana also exposes your baby to carbon monoxide (5 times more than with cigarettes), which lowers the amount of oxygen available in the baby's bloodstream.

With marijuana use in pregnancy, your baby may also be more likely to have:

- A lower birth-weight
- Higher risk of cigarette and marijuana smoking as a teenager
- Higher rates of 'delinquent' behavior
- Higher rates of mental health problems

There may also be a higher risk of some birth defects, premature birth and admission to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU).

## Should I use marijuana if I breastfeed?

It is not safe to use marijuana while you are breastfeeding. THC builds up in breast milk as much as 8 times higher than in a mother's bloodstream. THC is then absorbed into a baby's bloodstream and can be stored in a baby's fat tissue for weeks to months. THC also gets into a baby's brain and can make a baby extra sleepy and not feed very well. It can also cause delays in a baby's development. Marijuana has also been shown to contain other dangerous substances.

## What is marijuana use?

Marijuana use affects your ability to think clearly, stay alert, make good decisions and respond to the needs of your baby. Marijuana use includes:

- Smoking marijuana
- Eating and drinking marijuana in any form
- Using vaporizers
- Eating or smoking wax or hash
- Any other methods

## Is medical marijuana safe?

Medical marijuana is not regulated or approved by the Food and Drug Administration. Talk to your prenatal care and/or pediatric provider about safer options.