

## What Can I Do to Stop Using Marijuana?

It is important that you continue to see your Healthcare Provider throughout your pregnancy. Also, it is important that you are honest with the medical staff that are caring for you during your pregnancy. They can help you with delivering a healthy baby if they know everything about your health. Good prenatal care can help your baby be born healthy.

If you are not sure you want to enter treatment and want to try quitting on your own, it is still a good idea to have a positive support person to help you. Quitting marijuana is not easy and you should not feel embarrassed if you have a hard time quitting. There are people that work with your doctor that can help you quit marijuana, just ask to speak with them.

There are several options available to help you stop using marijuana. Please speak with your Healthcare Provider or Healthcare Specialist to find out more information.

It's never too late. You should never feel ashamed to ask for help.

## For More Information

### **Allegheny County SBIRT Project- Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment**

110 Roessler Road  
Suite 200B  
Pittsburgh, PA 15220  
412-253-1260

*This information was gathered from the following sources:*

### **American Pregnancy Association**

1-800-672-2296  
[www.americanpregnancy.org](http://www.americanpregnancy.org)

### **March of Dimes**

1275 Mamaroneck Avenue  
White Plains, NY 10605  
National Office Phone:  
(914) 997-4488  
[www.marchofdimes.com](http://www.marchofdimes.com)

### **Merck & Co., Inc.**

One Merck Drive  
P.O. Box 100  
Whitehouse Station, NJ 08889-0100 SA  
Phone: 908-423-1000  
Monday-Friday 8:30 AM - 5:30 PM ET  
[www.merck.com](http://www.merck.com)

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## Marijuana Use and Your Pregnancy



Allegheny County SBIRT Project

### *What Happens When a Pregnant Woman Uses Marijuana?*

Marijuana reaches your baby through your bloodstream. A chemical called THC is the main active ingredient in marijuana. It enters your bloodstream and travels through the placenta and umbilical cord to your baby.

### *How Can Marijuana Affect My Baby?*

Marijuana can affect the size and weight of your baby as well as the development of the brain or other organs.

Smoking marijuana decreases the oxygen supply to your baby by making your blood vessels smaller. During pregnancy, babies need oxygen to fully grow. If you smoke marijuana (or cigarettes) while you are pregnant your baby will get less oxygen than if you stopped smoking. Research suggests that babies of mothers who smoke while they are pregnant may be smaller and may weigh less than babies of non-smokers.

Marijuana is linked to shorter pregnancies and premature births. This can increase the chance that your baby will be born smaller or weigh less.

Not all the effects of smoking marijuana during pregnancy are visible. Some other problems can include your baby shaking or having a high pitched cry. Both of these things can indicate that there may be a problem with your baby's brain.

Marijuana can also cause problems that may not be seen until the child is older. Some studies suggest that babies who are exposed to marijuana can have trouble at school and home as they grow up. They may have problems with memory tasks or staying focused and paying attention.

Smoking marijuana can also affect your health in ways that can hurt your baby. Smoking marijuana has been linked to weight gain. Continuing to smoke while you are pregnant could make it harder to maintain and gain a healthy amount of weight for your baby to grow.

Smoking marijuana may also be dangerous because you can not be sure what it contains. Marijuana is sometimes laced or cut with other drugs like cocaine or PCP. These substances can also harm your baby. Marijuana could also contain pesticides or bacteria which could make you or baby sick. Because you can't be sure of what is in it, you should avoid using marijuana or other drugs while you are pregnant.

### *Birth Weight and Your Baby*

Marijuana use can cause your baby to be low in birth weight. Using additional substances, particularly cigarettes or other drugs, contribute to this factor. Premature infants that are low birth weight are more likely to die in their first month of life than normal-weight babies. They are also more likely to have life-long learning problems.

### *What If I Used Marijuana before I knew I was Pregnant?*

Researchers do not know for sure what amount of marijuana is needed to cause problems with a baby's development. Because of this, any use of marijuana while pregnant should be avoided. If you stop using marijuana as soon as you learn you are pregnant you will decrease the chance of causing your baby harm.

If you have used marijuana throughout your pregnancy, you need to let your physician know so he/she can prepare the best care for you and your baby throughout your pregnancy and delivery. There are people here that are willing to help you in a non-judgmental manner. All conversations are confidential. It's never too late.

### *Is it safe to smoke marijuana when I am breastfeeding?*

If you use marijuana while you are breastfeeding, THC can be passed to your baby through your breast milk. It is possible that the concentration of THC in your breast milk is actually higher than the concentration of THC in your body. Because we are not sure how marijuana and THC affect growing babies, women should avoid using marijuana while breastfeeding.