

Can methadone treatment help me have a healthy pregnancy?

Yes. Methadone is a long-acting opioid drug used with counseling and other services to help people stop using heroin. Methadone Maintenance Treatment (MMT) can help you have a healthy pregnancy and birth and:

- Save your baby's life
- Lower or get rid of cravings
- Prevent withdrawal for 24 hours or more
- Improve physical and emotional health
- Raise your quality of life

MMT is safe for babies, but can make some babies have these temporary symptoms:

- Fussiness
- Not eating or sleeping well
- Fever
- Vomiting
- Trembling

Usually, these symptoms go away after a few weeks.

Babies born to mothers on methadone do as well as other babies. Thousands of healthy babies born to mothers on methadone grow up to be healthy kids.

In Pennsylvania pregnant women and those who use drugs intravenously are given priority for access to treatment for substance use, abuse, and dependence.

Help is available.

We know that drug use during pregnancy is a result of the power of addiction. There are people that work with your healthcare provider that can help you, just ask to speak with them.

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

**Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
National Helpline:**

1-800-662-HELP (4357)

Information gathered from:

March of Dimes
1275 Mamaroneck Avenue
White Plains, NY 10605
National Office Phone:
(914) 997-4488
www.marchofdimes.com

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information
1-800-729-6686
www.ncadi.samhsa.gov

Pamphlet arranged by:

Allegheny County SBIRT Project-Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment
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Heroin Use and Your Pregnancy



Allegheny County SBIRT Project

How can heroin affect my baby?

If a woman uses heroin during pregnancy, the drug crosses the placenta into the baby's blood.

Heroin can make a baby be born too early, too small and have problems growing. Babies born too early that have 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.

Some babies are born dependent on heroin and may:

- Be fussy and hard to comfort
- Have spasms
- Have diarrhea and vomiting
- Have sleep problems
- Have breathing problems
- Be at risk to die from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)

If a mother uses needles and gets HIV/AIDS or Hepatitis B or C, she can pass these on to her unborn baby.

And remember, using drugs doesn't make you a bad parent, but does make it harder to be a good parent. To take good care of a child, you must be alert, be able to pay attention, have patience and good judgment. Using drugs makes all of these harder.

How can heroin affect my pregnancy?



Problems that can happen during pregnancy if heroin is used:

- The placenta can separate too soon
- High blood pressure and seizures
- Not enough blood in the placenta
- Breech birth
- The baby can be born too early (premature birth)
- Stillbirth

Withdrawal is risky during pregnancy. It can lead to premature labor, miscarriage or stillbirth.

What about my health?

Heroin use can lead to major health problems like:

- Addiction
- HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis B or C, or other diseases
- Collapsed veins
- Heart infections
- Open sores (abscesses)
- Arthritis
- Overdose and death

Street heroin may be cut with other substances that can cause infections, damage to organs or death.

Withdrawal can happen if regular use is reduced or stopped. It can happen as early as a few hours after using and cause:

- Strong cravings
- Anxiety
- Pain
- Diarrhea and vomiting
- Chills

What if I have been using heroin and I am pregnant?

You should continue to see your healthcare provider all through your pregnancy and be honest with her or him. Healthcare providers can give you good care if they know everything about your health. Good prenatal care can help your baby be born healthy.

Pregnant women who want to stop using heroin need to be very careful. Withdrawal can be risky for your baby. Please speak with your healthcare provider or healthcare specialist to get help.

Methadone maintenance programs help women and babies have better health during pregnancy and birth than women using heroin.