



# MARIJUANA AND PREGNANT OR BREASTFEEDING MOTHERS

Using marijuana while pregnant or breastfeeding can be dangerous for your baby. Although more research is needed, here is what we do know.

## Marijuana can harm your baby.

- Research has shown that using marijuana while you are pregnant or breastfeeding can negatively affect your baby's health in the following ways:
  - Your baby is more likely to be a low birth weight. This can lead to health problems, especially in the first year of life.
  - The physical and cognitive growth and development of your baby can be harmed.
  - Pregnant women who use marijuana have a 2.3 times greater risk of stillbirth.

## How does marijuana reach my baby?

- In any form of ingestion (smoking, vaping, eating, or drinking) THC, the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana, can reach your baby through three different pathways:
  - **Through your blood.**  
THC in your bloodstream can pass through the placenta and enter your baby's bloodstream.
  - **Through your breast milk.**  
THC is primarily stored in fat cells and released over time. It stays in your breast milk and can be ingested by your baby during feedings.
  - **Through their lungs.**  
Secondhand smoke from marijuana can enter your baby's lungs as they breathe. Marijuana smoke has been found to have many of the same dangerous chemicals found in tobacco smoke.

If you or a loved one is struggling with substance use disorder, call the Massachusetts Substance Use Helpline at 800-327-5050. They can connect you with treatment programs in your area.

## No amount of marijuana is safe

- The American College of Obstetrics and Gynecologists and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend that you:
  - **Discontinue use** if you are pregnant or thinking about becoming pregnant.
  - **Seek alternate medical treatment** if you are using marijuana for medicinal purposes. Ask your doctor for alternatives which research has shown to be safe for your baby.
  - **Avoid secondhand smoke.** Just like tobacco smoke, breathing in smoke from marijuana can lower your oxygen levels which is bad for both you and your baby. It can also introduce toxins into your system and harm your lungs.

**Talk to your healthcare provider about any questions you have about marijuana.**

