

Marijuana and Your Baby

To limit potential risk to your baby, you should not use marijuana or products containing THC in any form while you are pregnant or breastfeeding.

Talk to your doctor if you are pregnant or breastfeeding and need help to stop using marijuana. Or call 1-800-CHILDREN for help.

IS IT SAFE FOR ME TO USE MARIJUANA AND BREASTFEED?

Little is known about the transfer of the chemicals found in marijuana (cannabis), particularly cannabidiol (CBD) and Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), into breast milk. Even less is known about the effects they can have on your baby. To limit potential risk to your infant, you should not use marijuana products, including CBD, while breastfeeding.

Some chemicals from marijuana products (including edibles or other concentrates) can be passed from you to your baby through your breast milk. These chemicals have the potential to affect a variety of neurodevelopmental processes in your baby. THC, the psychoactive component of marijuana, is stored in body fat and slowly released over time, meaning your baby could be exposed to an unknown amount and for an extended period of time. In addition, some products, including CBD products, may contain other contaminants (e.g., pesticides, heavy metals, bacteria, and fungus) that could be dangerous to you and your baby.

If you use marijuana products while breastfeeding, it is recommended that you should significantly reduce or eliminate your intake. To minimize secondhand exposure, do not smoke around babies or children. Marijuana products may also impair your or other caregiver's judgment and ability to care for a baby.

Know the Facts

MARIJUANA AND PREGNANCY

- THC is the chemical in marijuana that makes you feel "high." It is possible that THC may impact your baby's health if use occurs during pregnancy.
- Using marijuana while pregnant may harm your baby.
- Some hospitals test babies after birth for drugs. If your baby tests positive for THC at birth, child protective services may be notified. Talk to your doctor early in your pregnancy about any marijuana use. Seek help to stop using marijuana as soon as possible.

MARIJUANA AND BREASTFEEDING

- Breastfeeding has many health benefits for both you and your baby. THC in cannabis can get into breast milk for an unknown period of time. The health impacts to the baby from breastfeeding after you use marijuana are unknown.
- Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine says that breastfeeding mothers should avoid or reduce use of marijuana, and should be advised on long-term neurobehavioral risks. You should avoid direct exposure of smoke to your baby. ABM also states that at this time, although the data are not strong enough to recommend not breastfeeding with any marijuana use, they urge caution.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics says that you should not use marijuana while breastfeeding.



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THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

Is smoking marijuana bad for my baby?

Yes. Breathing marijuana smoke is bad for you and your baby. Marijuana smoke has many of the same chemicals as tobacco smoke. Some of these chemicals can cause cancer. Smoking increases the risk of SIDS for your baby. Do not allow anyone to smoke in your home or around your baby.

What if I use marijuana without smoking it?

THC may be bad for your baby. Some people think that using a vape pen or eating marijuana (like cookies or brownies) is safer than smoking marijuana. Even though these forms do not have harmful smoke, they still contain THC and chemicals that can potentially harm your baby.

What happens if my child eats or drinks marijuana by accident?

- Marijuana can make children very sick. Look for problems walking or sitting up, starting to be sleepy or having a hard time breathing.
- If you are worried, call the poison control hotline as soon as possible. Calling is free and you will be helped quickly: 1-800-222-1222.
- If symptoms worsen, call 911 or go to an emergency room right away.

What else should I know to keep my baby safe?

- Being high while caring for baby is not safe. Do not let anyone who is high take care of your baby.
- Any form of smoking, tobacco or cannabis, can increase the risk of SIDS. Do not sleep with your baby if smoking.
- If you plan to use marijuana, make sure another person is available to safely care for your baby.
- It is not safe to drive a car while high. Do not let your baby ride in a car if the driver is high.

Although marijuana is natural, it is not safe.

Not all natural substances or plants are safe. Tobacco and poisonous berries are great examples. Marijuana contains THC, which may harm your baby.



REFERENCES:

- Centers for Disease Control & Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/breastfeeding-special-circumstances/vaccinations-medications-drugs/marijuana.html>
- Monitoring Health Concerns Related to Marijuana in Colorado: 2016 Report. Colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/retail-marijuana-public-health-advisory-committee
- Thank you to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment for permission to adapt their handout on this topic. Colorado document adapted with permission: https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/MJ_RMEP_Factsheet-Pregnancy-Breastfeeding.pdf

