



# MARIJUANA AND YOUR BABY

Medical marijuana is now legal but this does not mean it is safe for pregnant or breastfeeding moms or babies. You should not use marijuana while you are pregnant, just like you should not use alcohol and tobacco.

## MARIJUANA AND PREGNANCY

Studies show that marijuana use during pregnancy may be harmful to a baby's health and cause a variety of problems, including:



**Fetal growth restriction**  
(when a baby doesn't gain the appropriate amount of weight before birth).



**A greater risk of stillbirth**



**Preterm birth** (being born before 37 weeks of gestation)



**Low birth weight**



**Long-term brain development**  
issues affecting memory, learning, and behavior

Whether smoked, eaten in food (edibles), or vaped, marijuana is stronger than ever before, which makes use during pregnancy especially risky for a developing baby's health. Marijuana contains nearly 500 chemicals, including the mind-altering compound tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). These chemicals can pass through a woman's placenta to her baby during pregnancy.

## MARIJUANA AND BREASTFEEDING

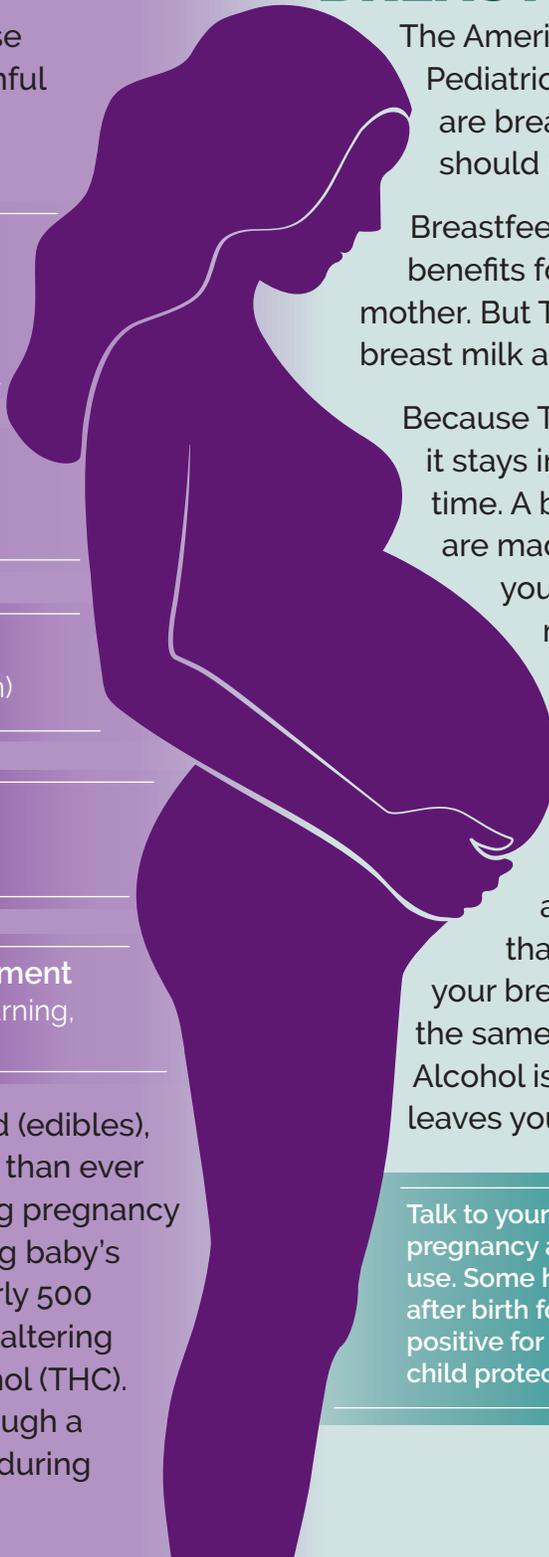
The American Academy of Pediatrics says that mothers who are breastfeeding their babies should not use marijuana.

Breastfeeding has many health benefits for both the baby and the mother. But THC in marijuana gets into breast milk and may affect your baby.

Because THC is stored in body fat, it stays in your body for a long time. A baby's brain and body are made with a lot of fat. Since your baby's brain and body may store THC for a long time, you should not use marijuana while you are pregnant or breastfeeding.

Breast milk also contains a lot of fat. This means that "pumping and dumping" your breast milk may not work the same way it does with alcohol. Alcohol is not stored in fat so it leaves your body faster.

Talk to your doctor early in your pregnancy about any marijuana use. Some hospitals test babies after birth for drugs. If your baby tests positive for THC at birth, Oklahoma law says child protective services must be notified.



# MYTHS ABOUT MARIJUANA

## **MYTH: MARIJUANA IS SAFE TO USE WHILE PREGNANT OR BREASTFEEDING.**

FACT: You cannot eat or use some foods and medicines while pregnant or breastfeeding. This is because they might harm the baby. This includes marijuana.

## **MYTH: BECAUSE MEDICAL MARIJUANA IS LEGAL, IT IS SAFE.**

FACT: Using marijuana during pregnancy may harm your baby, just like alcohol or tobacco. Being legal does not make it safe.

## **MYTH: BECAUSE MARIJUANA IS NATURAL, IT IS SAFE.**

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

## **MYTH: BECAUSE SOME PEOPLE USE MARIJUANA AS MEDICINE, IT IS SAFE.**

FACT: Marijuana can be recommended by a doctor in special cases. A doctor decides whether the benefits are greater than the risks. It is unsafe to use any medicines while pregnant or breastfeeding that are not recommended by a doctor. This includes marijuana. Talk to your doctor about safer choices that do not risk harming your baby.

# FAQS: MARIJUANA AND YOUR BABY

## **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. Do not allow anyone to smoke in your home or around your baby.

## **WHAT IF I USE MARIJUANA WITHOUT SMOKING IT?**

THC in any form of marijuana 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.

## **HOW CAN I STORE MARIJUANA SAFELY?**

It is important to keep all marijuana products in child-resistant packaging and locked out of sight and reach of children.

## **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 suspect your child has consumed marijuana, call the Poison Control hotline at **1-800-222-1222**. If someone has a severe reaction after consuming marijuana, **call 911**.

**FOR HELP  
FINDING TREATMENT  
REFERRALS, CALL**

**211**

## **WHAT ELSE SHOULD I KNOW TO KEEP MY BABY SAFE?**

- Being high while caring for a baby is not safe. Do not let anyone who is high take care of your baby.
- Some marijuana can make people feel very sleepy when they are high. It is not safe for your baby to sleep with you, especially if you are high.
- If you plan to use marijuana, make sure there is another person who can safely care for your baby.
- It is not safe or legal to drive a car while high. Do not let your baby ride in a car if the driver is high.
- All marijuana products must use the universal symbol on packaging and edible products. Be sure to teach your kids not to eat or drink anything with this symbol.



**CONTAINS THC  
NOT SAFE FOR KIDS OR PETS**

## **LEARN MORE: OKLAHOMA.GOV/HEALTH/OVERDOSE**

This publication was supported by cooperative agreement 6NU17CE924993-02 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the CDC or the Department of Health and Human Services. This publication was issued by the Oklahoma State Department of Health, an equal opportunity employer and provider. 500 copies were printed by Docutech at a cost of \$150. A digital file has been deposited with the Publications Clearinghouse of the Oklahoma Department of Libraries in compliance with section 3-114 of Title 65 of the Oklahoma Statutes and is available for download at documents.ok.gov. 1 July 2020 | 2007081PS



**OKLAHOMA  
State Department  
of Health**