



# MARIJUANA AND YOUR BABY



Marijuana is now legal for adults over 21 but this doesn't 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.

## KNOW THE FACTS



### Marijuana and Pregnancy:

- Using marijuana while pregnant may harm your baby. Marijuana that passes to your baby during pregnancy may make it hard for your child to pay attention and learn, especially as your child grows older. This would make it harder for your child to do well in school.
- Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) is the chemical in marijuana that makes you feel “high.” Using marijuana while you are pregnant passes THC to your baby.
- Some hospitals test babies after birth for drugs. If your baby tests positive for THC at birth, Colorado law says child protective services must be notified. Talk to your doctor early in your pregnancy about any marijuana use.

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



## MYTHS ABOUT MARIJUANA

**Marijuana is not safe to use while pregnant or breastfeeding.**

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

**Even though marijuana is legal, it is not safe.**

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

**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 a baby.

**Although some people use marijuana as medicine, it is not safe.**

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.**



## 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. 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?**

Store all marijuana products in a locked area. Make sure your children cannot see or reach the locked area. Keep marijuana in the child-resistant packaging from the store.

**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 seem bad, call 911 or go to an emergency room right away

**What else should I know to keep my baby safe?**

- Being high or buzzed while doing some activities can be risky.
- 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 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.



**REFERENCES:** All information on the health effects of marijuana comes from the Monitoring Health Concerns Related to Marijuana in Colorado: 2016 Report. [Colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/retail-marijuana-public-health-advisory-committee](http://colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/retail-marijuana-public-health-advisory-committee)



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