

Expectant Parents

Keeping your baby safe

Now that you are expecting a child, a lot of questions typically come to mind. Keep your baby as safe as possible, and consider these habits that could cause complications during pregnancy.

- Stop or reduce your intake of caffeine to less than 200 mg per day or about 1 8-ounce cup of coffee. Caffeine has no nutritive value and makes it hard for your body to absorb iron. It can make it hard for you to get a good night's sleep and can contribute to heartburn.
- Stop smoking. Smoking before, during, or after birth affects both your health and your baby's. Living with someone who smokes also affects the health of mothers and infants. Recent studies have shown that secondhand smoke can have an adverse effect on your baby—as well as on you. Smoking can increase your risk for miscarriage, low-baby weight, and premature delivery, among others. Ask your caregiver about smoking cessation.
- Any alcohol during pregnancy quickly reaches the baby through your bloodstream and increases the baby's risk of low birthweight and problems with learning, speech, and attention span. Alcohol can cause Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS), one of the leading forms of mental retardation and physical abnormalities in the United States.
- Illegal drugs are never safe in pregnancy. Marijuana, like cigarette smoke, reduces the amount of oxygen a baby receives, and may result in a low birth weight and other problems. Babies who survive exposure to illegal drugs during pregnancy are very likely to have lifelong physical, behavioral, and emotional issues.



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