

## Pregnancy: Stress & Nutrition

### Stress

Stress affects many different areas of the body by causing changes in heart rate, lowered ability to fight illness, high blood pressure and raised hormone levels. Such changes during pregnancy can cause premature labor, illness, low birth weight, miscarriage and birth defects.

Pregnant women under stress are also more likely to engage in activities that are unhealthy and harmful for their unborn baby, like drinking alcohol, smoking, using drugs or overeating. It is important to find healthy ways to reduce stress during pregnancy. Listen to music, talk to friends, take walks, read and participate in safe hobbies to relieve stress during pregnancy.

### Nutrition

A pregnant woman needs an average of 300 calories more than a non-pregnant woman per day. However, eating large portions of foods that are high in calories, fats, sugar, salt and cholesterol during pregnancy can cause unhealthy weight gain. Maternal obesity can cause high blood pressure, gestational diabetes and other dangerous complications for both the mother and baby.

Practice healthy habits by eating more whole grains, fruits and vegetables. Eat healthy snacks and control your meal portions. Discuss your prenatal eating and exercise habits with your doctor in order to stay healthy.

## What to do if...

*You are pregnant and are smoking, drinking or using drugs...*

**Quit today and seek help for you and your baby.**

*Someone close to you is pregnant...*

**Support her by helping her abstain from harmful substances.**

*You are not pregnant, but could get pregnant...*

**Most women don't know they are pregnant until after the first month. Plan ahead, because this is when the most damage can be done.**

*Your doctor or family member told you it was okay to drink alcohol...*

**Refuse completely because no amount is safe.**



**ZERO Exposure Project**

An Initiative of the Healthy Start Coalition of Hillsborough County, Inc.

[www.zeroexposure.org](http://www.zeroexposure.org)

1-877-233-5656

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Children's Board  
HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

Dreams Worth Growing

# A Pregnant Woman Never Takes Risks Alone.



[www.zeroexposure.org](http://www.zeroexposure.org)

## Pregnancy & Legal Substances

**Some legal substances can be just as harmful to your unborn baby as illegal substances.**

### **Cigarettes (Tobacco)**

Tobacco smoke and chew contain nicotine and many other harmful chemicals. Smoking during pregnancy deprives the baby of the oxygen needed to develop properly. Smokers are twice as likely to deliver low-birth-weight infants. Other risks include: gestational diabetes, miscarriage, stillbirth, and future infertility for mom and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and asthma for baby.

### **Alcohol**

No amount of alcohol is safe to drink during pregnancy. Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can cause permanent brain damage. Babies exposed to alcohol can be born with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) or Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders, which include: mental retardation, abnormal facial features, birth defects and learning and behavioral problems. Do not drink if you are pregnant or could be pregnant.

### **Over the Counter & Prescription Drugs**

There are many over-the-counter medicines and prescription drugs that can put your baby's health at risk. Consult your doctor before taking any medicine.

### **Caffeine**

Caffeine is a stimulant found in coffee, tea, soda, energy drinks and chocolate. It raises your heart rate and can increase the risk for miscarriage.

## It is never too late to quit...

**You have the opportunity to make a change you will never regret.**



### **You Can...**

- **Tell your doctor you want help.**
- **Visit [www.zeroexposure.org](http://www.zeroexposure.org) to get more information.**
- **Call 1-877-233-5656 for immediate help.**

**Make a promise to yourself  
and your unborn child today.  
Stay healthy and substance free.**

**[www.zeroexposure.org](http://www.zeroexposure.org)**

## Pregnancy & Illegal Substances

**Illegal substances are very harmful for you and your unborn baby.**

### **Marijuana**

Smoking marijuana during pregnancy slows fetal growth, increases the risk of premature birth and causes developmental problems for the baby.

### **Cocaine & Crack**

Cocaine is a highly addictive drug that attacks the central nervous system. Inhaling or injecting cocaine during pregnancy increases the risk for miscarriage, stillbirth, placental abruption, premature birth and mental retardation. Infants can also suffer from life-threatening withdrawal symptoms.

### **Amphetamines (Crystal Meth, Ecstasy & Speed)**

Amphetamine use during pregnancy causes premature labor, birth defects and placental abruption. Infants can also be born with damaged nervous systems and suffer from withdrawal symptoms.

### **Heroin**

Heroin use during pregnancy puts infants at risk for premature birth, low birth weight, breathing problems, low blood sugar, bleeding within the brain and death. Infants can also suffer from withdrawal symptoms.

### **Prescription Drug Abuse**

Taking medication in excess or without a prescription can be harmful during pregnancy. Xanax, Valium, OxyContin, Ritalin and Paxil are different brands of drugs that can cause birth-defects, low-birth weight or dangerous withdrawal effects for the infant.