

Pregnancy and Smoking

How Does Smoking Affect Pregnancy?

Research has shown that smoking during pregnancy, or being around other people smoking, causes health problems for both mother and baby.

Problems for the Mother

Smoking can cause infertility, so that you have a more difficult time getting pregnant in the first place.

Smoking while pregnant raises the risk of ectopic pregnancy, which is when the baby grows in the wrong place inside you (usually the fallopian tubes). As the baby develops, you suddenly have severe bleeding which can lead to your death. Ectopic pregnancy always causes a miscarriage, and you might not be able to have more children.

Tobacco smoke can also cause problems with your placenta (the organ that helps feed the baby). This can result in severe bleeding – which is dangerous for the mother – and can lead to miscarriage, premature birth, or even the baby dying.

If you smoke while you're pregnant, or spend time around others who are smoking, you face the same risks that all smokers do, such as cancer, heart disease and lung disease. However, as a parent, you have the added concern of needing to be alive and healthy so that you can take care of your child.

Problems for the Baby

Because tobacco smoke contains dangerous chemicals, your baby is at a higher risk of being born dead (stillborn).

Babies born to mothers who smoke are more likely to be born too early or be too small, which might mean they can't go home from the hospital with you.

After the baby is home, he or she is more likely to die of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) if you smoke.

If you smoke while pregnant, your baby is more likely to have health problems later in his or her childhood, such as asthma and other lung problems. Your child may also have more behavior problems or trouble learning in school.

When You Stop Smoking

- Your baby has a better chance of being born on time, being a normal birth weight and having healthier lungs.
- Your breast milk will be healthier for your baby.
- Your baby is less likely to die of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).
- Your baby will be more protected from childhood health problems, and behavior and learning problems.

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