

Cannabis

Before, during and after pregnancy

It is not safe to use cannabis during pregnancy and when breastfeeding.

Fast facts

- Using cannabis during pregnancy may increase your baby's risk of developmental problems.
- The chemicals in any form of cannabis may be harmful for your baby.
- Smoking daily is considered heavy use.
- If you use cannabis and are pregnant or planning a pregnancy, talk to your health care provider.
- Cannabis smoke contains many of the same harmful chemicals as cigarette smoke.



Fertility

Heavy cannabis use is linked to:

- changes to the menstrual cycle of women
- low sperm count and poor sperm quality in men



Pregnancy

- Cannabis contains over **400** chemicals including THC – the chemical that makes you feel “high.”
- These chemicals **can pass from your body to your baby** when you are pregnant and may be harmful.
- Cannabis smoke lowers the supply of oxygen and nutrients to your baby.



Baby

- A baby's brain contains a lot of fat. THC is stored in fat. Therefore, it could largely affect how your baby's brain develops.
- Cannabis in pregnancy can increase the risk of:
 - pre-term birth
 - low birth weight baby
 - lower IQ scores
 - impulsivity and hyperactivity in childhood
 - learning, memory and problem solving difficulties in teens and later in life



Can cannabis affect my breastmilk? Yes.

- Cannabis can lower your breastmilk supply and make it harder for your baby to latch properly.
- Cannabis can affect your breastfed baby by slowing baby's movements, responses and becoming sedated.
- Cannabis passes from your breastmilk to your baby. THC and other chemicals are stored in baby's fat cells and brain.

Will it help if I "pump and dump" my breastmilk after using cannabis?

No. Because THC is stored in body fat, it stays in the body for a long time. This means that "pumping and dumping" your breast milk does not work.



Cannabis and parenting



Cannabis use can affect your short-term memory, attention and reaction time. Parenting while impaired may reduce your ability to make good decisions and protect your child from harm. You may also miss your child's cues for hunger, comfort or to play and learn.



Second-hand cannabis smoke is harmful for all of us. It is best not to smoke or vaporize cannabis in your home or around your baby or children.



Bed sharing is not safe. Bed sharing while high makes the risk of sleep related deaths even higher. Place your baby to sleep alone on their back in their crib, cradle or bassinet.



Store your cannabis in a safe place, so your children cannot reach it. If you think your child took any form of cannabis, get medical help right away. Call the **Ontario Poison Centre** at **1-800-268-9017** or call **911** immediately.



Driving high can double the risk of death and serious injury in a motor vehicle collision. Plan a safe ride home.

For more information or help

- talk to your health care provider
- call anytime to access addictions, mental health and crisis services – Here 24/7: 1-844-437-3247
- for assistance in accessing addiction, mental health, and problem gambling services contact ConnexOntario: 1-866-531-2600

Adapted from a resource produced by the City of Hamilton Public Health Services.

Alternate formats of this document are available upon request.

Region of Waterloo Public Health and Emergency Services

Healthy Living