**Stimulants and Your Baby**

The Harmful Effects

Stimulants are drugs like MDMA, crack/cocaine and methamphetamine. When a pregnant woman takes a stimulant, she raises her heart rate and blood pressure while causing her body to cut off blood flow to her baby.

Taking stimulants while pregnant can stunt your baby’s growth. It can also cause premature births or miscarriage.

That’s not all - babies can be born addicted to the stimulants that their mother abused during pregnancy. Addicted babies experience painful withdrawal symptoms, like muscle spasms, sleeplessness and the possibility of future developmental issues.

**Little Addicts**

The Effects of Narcotics on Your Baby

Narcotic drugs include heroin, morphine and prescription painkillers. These drugs are dangerous for everyone, but when pregnant women use them, they put their baby at risk for:

- Premature birth
- Low birth weight
- Internal bleeding in the brain

Often, these babies are addicted to narcotics - just like their mothers. Withdrawal symptoms for babies include stiff joints, vomiting and diarrhea.

**Chemicals in the Womb**

The Harmful Effects of Inhalants and Hallucinogens

People who abuse inhalants will huff things like glue, paint and household cleaners in order to get buzzed. While they’re getting high, they’re passing chemicals to their baby. This can cause side effects like:

- Slow growth and low birth weight
- Miscarriage and premature birth
- Birth defects, like cleft lips and clubbed feet
- Mental retardation and learning disabilities

Just like inhalants, hallucinogen abuse can cause a variety of birth defects. Taking drugs like LSD, PCP, or ketamine while pregnant can cause:

- Brain damage
- Birth defects of all body parts, including the face, brain, head, heart, arms and legs
- Low birth weight
- Poor muscle control
- Withdrawal symptoms

Drug abuse is bad for you, and even worse for your baby. It can lead to life-threatening complications and permanent health problems.

**Addicted and Pregnant?**

Getting Help for You and Your Child

If you're pregnant, it's vitally important to stop taking drugs immediately. Don't try to go through it alone - there are many free or low-cost options available to help you stay off drugs and keep you and your baby healthy.

If you need help quitting drugs and/or tobacco, try one of these options:

- Talking to your doctor about treatment
- Visiting NA, Narcotics Anonymous
- Calling a substance abuse hotline or treatment facility

You put your baby at risk every single time you take drugs, whether it's in the form of a cigarette, pill, joint, or needle. If you need help, ask for it. Reach out to your friends, family and healthcare professionals.

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An Unfair Beginning
Drug Abuse and Your Unborn Baby
You already know that doing drugs comes with consequences.
When you abuse drugs, you put yourself at risk for scary short
and long-term side effects, such as poor judgment, heart fail-
ure, memory problems, brain damage and death. Pregnant drug
users put their babies at risk too. Women who abuse drugs while
pregnant are doing more than getting high - they're gambling with
their baby's health.
A pregnant drug user passes drugs through her body and into her
baby's system. Because the baby's body isn't fully developed yet,
the drugs have greater effects on the baby.
Marijuana and Pregnancy
A Losing Situation
Smoking pot while pregnant puts your baby's health at risk. Any
drugs, marijuana included, that you put into your body will eventually
cross the placenta and enter your baby's developing body. In
other words, instead of getting oxygen and good nutrients like your
baby is supposed to get through the placenta, he or she will receive
smoke and dangerous chemicals when you get high.
Have you heard of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS)? FAS occurs when
a pregnant woman drinks alcohol, and it can lead to birth defects,
learning disabilities and mental retardation. Research suggests
that using marijuana during pregnancy can lead to similar side
effects, plus shortened memory, Attention Deficit Disorder and
delayed growth and development.
To avoid causing these health risks, the best guideline is this:
When you're pregnant, you must say "no" to pot. Always.

Choking on Tobacco Smoke
How Tobacco Use Hurts Your Baby
Use of any kind of tobacco will negatively affect your baby's
development. That includes cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, or
snus. The most common pregnancy complication that accompanies
tobacco use is low birth weight. Women who use tobacco during
pregnancy are more likely to give birth to underweight babies than
women who don't use tobacco.
That's not all, though. Tobacco can cause other serious side effects
to your child, including:
• Birth defects of the heart, brain and facial structure
• Increased risk of miscarriage, premature birth and stillbirth
• Increased risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
• Risk of stunted physical, mental and behavioral development
How does tobacco use cause these types of problems? When someone
smokes, the carbon monoxide replaces the oxygen that the baby
needs. Plus, the nicotine found in all types of tobacco restricts the
blood vessels of the uterus, cutting off all those nutrients and blood
that the baby needs.
Cutting out tobacco use can prevent all of these side effects.

Secondhand Smoke: Firsthand Danger
Maybe you quit smoking when you got pregnant, but your husband,
boyfriend, or other family members didn’t. Breathing in their
smoke can cause many of the same issues as continuing to smoke
yourself.
Stay away from people who smoke, and avoid going to smoky
places. Protect your baby.

Addicted at Birth
Katie and Andy's Story
Katie gave birth to her son Andy on a Friday at 1 PM. Just a few
hours later, the 22-year-old found herself being transferred to
the clinic at the county jail. The charge? Reckless endanger-
ment of a child.
No one knew that Katie had been shooting heroin during her
pregnancy. She carefully hid her secret from family and friends,
but her drug use became obvious when her son, Andy, was born
addicted to heroin.
Andy remained in the pediatric intensive care unit for over six
weeks after his mother was transferred to prison. After he was
born, he began experiencing painful withdrawal symptoms,
such as body tremors that made his tiny limbs go stiff with
pain. He screamed and cried night and day, until the nurses had
to administer small doses of morphine to ease the symptoms.
Without medication, Andy's withdrawal symptoms could have
turned into seizures or a stroke.
Every year, thousands of babies like Andy are born addicted to
drugs, whether it's tobacco, narcotics, stimulants, or depres-
sants. Each of these babies have to suffer through withdrawal
symptoms once it's born. If they even make it to birth.