

Marijuana and Your Baby



What is Marijuana?

Marijuana is made from the dried leaves and flowers of the hemp plant *Cannabis sativa*. Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) is the substance in the hemp that causes people to get “high.” THC is stored in fatty tissue. The brain has a lot of fatty tissue, so large amounts of THC is stored in the brain. Medical marijuana and recreational marijuana are the SAME as street marijuana. A person using medical marijuana has received a card from their care provider. While amendment 64 allows the legal use of marijuana by adults in Colorado, it is still considered illegal by the Federal government. It is strongly advised that marijuana not be mixed with pregnancy, breastfeeding, or parenting.

What happens when I use marijuana?

The effects of marijuana can differ or change depending on the strength, dose, and how much THC is in the hemp. Although THC is the main compound that causes the “high,” there are also over 60 different compounds that can affect your brain. Using marijuana can cause a range of feelings, from that of wellbeing to feeling afraid, and delusional. The symptoms can last 2 to 3 hours. The effects on your motor control can last even longer. THC stays in the body for about one week. There is no way to know how much THC you have in your body without undergoing testing.

How does marijuana use affect pregnancy?

Marijuana can cause problems for a developing baby. Some studies have found that babies born to users weighed less, and had smaller head sizes. Being born too small or too early is one of the leading causes of serious health problems and death for infants under one year of age. Early research shows that children born to mothers who used marijuana often may have trouble concentrating. This could make school harder for them.

How does marijuana use affect breastfeeding?

Everything that a mother eats, drinks, or smokes enters her breast milk. If a woman is breastfeeding and using marijuana, THC will be passed to her baby and the baby will have some effects of the drug. The THC and the other 60+ compounds will quickly move into the baby’s fat tissue as well as into his brain. This may lead to developmental problems, such as delay in crawling or grasping finger foods or other.

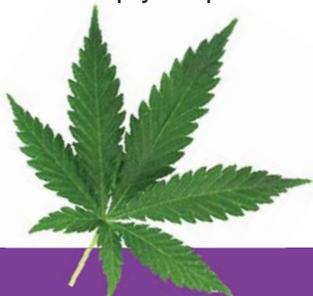
How does marijuana use affect parenting?

Use of marijuana by the parents, even for a medical reason, can affect how they interact with their child. The parent may not be fully aware of the infant’s basic needs such as when he is hungry, or needs a diaper change or just wants to be cuddled. Times to play, read and interact with their baby may be missed. These activities and interactions are a very important way that children begin to learn about the world around them.

It is strongly advised that marijuana not be mixed with pregnancy, breastfeeding, or parenting. In fact, the American Academy of Pediatrics lists marijuana as one of the drugs that is very harmful to infants.

Who do I call if I have questions or problems?

If you have questions, please talk with your healthcare provider. You can also ask your WIC staff for resources to help you quit.



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