

Anyone who is pregnant or breastfeeding, or who plans to become pregnant soon should not consume cannabis (marijuana, hashish, weed, pot, etc.) as it can affect the health of your baby. Below are important facts you should know.

### Cannabis Can Harm Your Baby

- Research shows that if you use cannabis while you are pregnant:
  - Your baby may be born with a lower birth weight.<sup>1,2</sup>
  - A low birth weight baby is more likely to have health problems, especially in the first year of life.<sup>3</sup>
  - The growth and development of your baby's brain can be harmed.<sup>4,5</sup>

### THC and Your Baby

- No matter how you use cannabis (smoking, vaping, eating, or drinking), the active ingredient in cannabis, THC (tetrahydrocannabinol), will reach your baby in three ways:
  - Through your bloodstream and into the placenta (the organ that feeds your baby during pregnancy).<sup>6,7</sup>
  - Through your breast milk.<sup>8,9</sup> “Pumping and Dumping” doesn't work. THC is stored in fat cells and is slowly released over several weeks, so it stays in your breast milk.<sup>10</sup>
  - Through secondhand smoke that enters your baby's lungs.<sup>11,12</sup>

### No Amount of Cannabis is Safe

- Leading doctors' organizations such as the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists<sup>13</sup> and the American Academy of Pediatrics<sup>14</sup> recommend that:
  - If you are pregnant or thinking about becoming pregnant soon, stop using cannabis. If you need help to stop using cannabis, please call 2-1-1 or visit [www.healthvermont.gov/find-treatment](http://www.healthvermont.gov/find-treatment) to find treatment options near you.
  - If you already use cannabis for medicinal purposes, stop use in favor of an alternative treatment that research shows is safer during pregnancy.
  - Don't breathe cannabis smoke or vapor if you are pregnant. It is bad for both you and your baby because, like tobacco smoke, it lowers your oxygen levels, introduces toxins into your system, and harms your lungs.<sup>15,16</sup>

Talk to your doctor about any questions you have about cannabis.<sup>17</sup>

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For more information on Vermont laws regarding cannabis, visit:

Vermont Legislature:  
<https://legislature.vermont.gov/>

Vermont Cannabis Control Board:  
<https://ccb.vermont.gov/>

- <sup>1</sup> Gunn, J. K., C. B. Rosales, K. E. Center, A. Nunez, S. J. Gibson, C. Christ, and J. E. Ehiri. 2016. "Prenatal exposure to cannabis and maternal and child health outcomes: a systematic review and meta-analysis." *BMJ Open* 6 (4):e009986. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2015-009986.
- <sup>2</sup> National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2017. "The Health Effects of Cannabis and Cannabinoids: The Current State of Evidence and Recommendations for Research." Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. doi: 10.17226/24625.
- <sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau. "Child Health USA 2014." Rockville, Maryland: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2014.
- <sup>4</sup> Wu, C. S., C. P. Jew, and H. C. Lu. 2011. "Lasting impacts of prenatal cannabis exposure and the role of endogenous cannabinoids in the developing brain." *Future Neurol* 6 (4):459-480.
- <sup>5</sup> Leech, S. L., G. A. Richardson, L. Goldschmidt, and N. L. Day. 1999. "Prenatal substance exposure: effects on attention and impulsivity of 6-year-olds." *Neurotoxicol Teratol* 21 (2):109-18.
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- <sup>10</sup> Reece-Stremtan, S., and K. A. Marinelli. 2015. "ABM clinical protocol #21: guidelines for breastfeeding and substance use or substance use disorder, revised 2015." *Breastfeed Med* 10 (3):135-41. doi: 10.1089/bfm.2015.9992.
- <sup>11</sup> Herrmann, E. S., E. J. Cone, J. M. Mitchell, G. E. Bigelow, C. LoDico, R. Flegel, and R. Vandrey. 2015. "Non-smoker exposure to secondhand cannabis smoke II: Effect of room ventilation on the physiological, subjective, and behavioral/cognitive effects." *Drug Alcohol Depend* 151:194-202. doi: 10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2015.03.019.
- <sup>12</sup> Moore, C., C. Coulter, D. Uges, J. Tuyay, S. van der Linde, A. van Leeuwen, M. Garnier, and J. Orbita, Jr. 2011. "Cannabinoids in oral fluid following passive exposure to marijuana smoke." *Forensic Sci Int* 212 (1-3):227-30. doi: 10.1016/j.forsciint.2011.06.019.
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- <sup>14</sup> American Academy of Pediatrics. 2012. "Section on Breastfeeding: Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk." *Pediatrics* 129 (3):e827-e841. doi: 10.1542/peds.2011-3552.
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