



Let's have a conversation about



# TOBACCO DURING PREGNANCY

and beyond

# PEOPLE WHO ARE PREGNANT, TRYING TO GET PREGNANT OR BREASTFEEDING

are encouraged not to use tobacco products for their health and the health of their baby. But quitting smoking can be one of the most difficult things a person can do, especially during times of stress. Sometimes you just need a little help, some good information, or someone to talk to for taking that important step to becoming tobacco free. [While nothing beats an open conversation with your health care provider, here are some answers to your most common questions, both to give you the facts about the risks of tobacco use during pregnancy and to inform that next conversation with your provider.](#)

## IS ANY AMOUNT SAFE?

Almost everyone has heard that there is no known safe amount of tobacco use during pregnancy. Smoking lowers the amount of food and oxygen your baby gets through the placenta. The less you smoke, the lower the risk of problems for both you and your baby. So while cutting back helps, quitting as soon as possible is always the best way to a healthy pregnancy.

## HOW CAN IT AFFECT MY BABY?

People who smoke have a higher risk of miscarriage and ectopic pregnancy (a dangerous complication where the embryo grows outside the uterus). Smoking increases your chances of placental problems, leading to the baby being born too small, too early or stillborn. Tobacco use in the home increases your baby's risk for asthma, infections and sudden unexpected infant death. Babies born to people who smoke can have symptoms of nicotine withdrawal. Studies have shown the link between smoking while pregnant and behavioral problems in childhood, like attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and even a higher likelihood of being overweight.

## I SMOKED BEFORE I KNEW I WAS PREGNANT. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

By stopping tobacco use in the first weeks of pregnancy, the negative effects on the developing baby will be lessened. Continued use, especially during the 3-8 week period where rapid development occurs, increases the chances for harm. Ask your health care provider about supports for stopping or decreasing use to quit.

## WHAT ABOUT VAPING?

While vaping may expose your baby to fewer toxins than smoking, it is not a safe alternative. Your baby will still be exposed to nicotine, flavorings and other dangerous chemicals found in e-cigarettes that pass from your lungs through the placenta.

## WHAT ABOUT REPLACEMENT THERAPIES?

Cigarette smoke contains thousands of chemicals, so anything that reduces smoking is better than continuing to smoke. Talk to your health care provider about nicotine replacement therapies and what may be the best choice for you personally.

## HOW ABOUT BREASTFEEDING?

Using tobacco products during breastfeeding is not recommended. Smoking can reduce the production of breast milk making breastfeeding more difficult. The vitamin and protein content in milk is decreased. And nicotine and other harmful chemicals from cigarettes, and heavy metals from vapes, can pass into breast milk. Nicotine remains in breast milk for at least three hours after smoking, and traces may be present much longer. If you smoke or vape, it's best to do so after breastfeeding and to reduce the frequency and amount of tobacco use to help with quitting.

## HOW LONG IS NICOTINE IN MY BREAST MILK?

Nicotine remains in breast milk for at least three hours after smoking, and traces may be present much longer.

## WHAT IF I ONLY SMOKE OUTSIDE?

It is critical to avoid secondhand exposure that occurs when the baby directly breathes exhaled smoke from a cigarette or aerosol from an e-cigarette. Thirdhand smoke exposure, which happens when infants breathe in chemicals present on clothing or fabrics, is also dangerous. Smoking outdoors will protect your baby and others in the home. Be sure to wear a removable smoking coat and wash your hands and face before holding your baby. Don't smoke in a closed area with your child, including cars.

## WHERE CAN I FIND HELP?

Visit [802quits.org](https://802quits.org) for more information or help quitting, call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) or talk to your health care provider.

[For more information, there's no better resource than your health care provider. Remember, they're not there to judge. They're there to help you have the healthiest pregnancy possible. Keep the conversation going.](#)