



Tips and tools for

# THE 9+ MONTH CONVERSATION

on substance use in pregnancy



# WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT?

Recent research shows the prevalence of **substance use in pregnancy is higher in Vermont** than other, similar states. To help the health care professionals working to reduce those numbers, the Vermont Department of Health created One More Conversation to encourage open, ongoing dialogue between professionals and their patients.

## TIPS

Suggestions on how and when to talk about substance use in pregnancy and beyond.

**Make the conversation part of every visit** and every mental-health check in.

- **Help patients understand that substance use disorder is a treatable disease**, not a character flaw.
- **Remind patients** about safe and effective treatments that improve pregnancy outcomes and breastfeeding.
- **When information on health impacts is limited (e.g. cannabis)** highlight this as a reason to not take chances.
- **Empower patients** to learn more with One More Conversation fact sheets.
- **Reinforce the idea that there is no known safe amount** of substance use during pregnancy or breastfeeding.

**Meet patients where they are** in their relationship to substances to help build trust.

- **Take the stigma out** of the conversation using non-judgmental language. Learn more about language at [Addictionary®](#)
- **Look for the reason behind the use** before making assumptions.

**Help patients find support**

- **Encourage patients to find support in family and friends.**
- **Refer patients to free support resources** including: [VT Helplink](#), [802Quits](#), [Help Me Grow](#)
- **Share this information** with other providers.

## TOOLS

Encourage your patients to continue the conversation.

### KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING OUTSIDE THE OFFICE

with digitally shareable information.

[Download Substance-Specific Fact Sheets](#)



### START THE CONVERSATION EARLY

with printable or emailable intake and discharge packet inserts.

[Download Inserts/Rack Cards](#)



### TEXT OR TELL

patients about this easy to remember patient page.

[1MORECONVERSATION.COM](#)



### ENCOURAGE PATIENTS TO THINK ABOUT DISCUSSING SUBSTANCE USE BEFORE THEIR APPOINTMENT

with in-office poster, flyer, and digital screens.

[Download In-Office Tools](#)



# OTHER RESOURCES

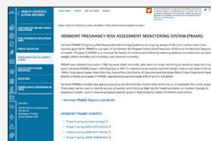
To help you care for pregnant and breastfeeding Vermonters.

## General Links & Research



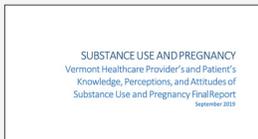
### Evidenced-based Screening Tool

A valuable resource that includes several evidence-based screening tools and other pertinent information.



### Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS)

data about pregnancy and the first few months after birth to help identify groups at high risk for health problems.



### Vermont Department of Health

2019 Report on Vermont Healthcare Provider's and Patient's Knowledge, Perceptions and Attitudes of Substance Use and Pregnancy



### National Center on Substance Use and Child Welfare

info on meeting the needs of pregnant women with substance use disorders.



### March of Dimes - Beyond Labels

Reducing stigma around substance use disorder and pregnancy.



Vermont Alcohol & Drug Information Clearinghouse Downloadable resources for pregnant families.

## Alcohol

**NOFAS** Prevention organization focused on raising awareness and supporting families with FAS (Fetal Alcohol Syndrome).

**SAMHSA Addressing Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder** Interventions for people who are pregnant and methods of identification for people living with FASD.

## Tobacco

**CDC Perinatal Tobacco Risk** Understanding the health effects of smoking and secondhand smoke on pregnancies.

## Cannabis

**Let's Talk Cannabis VT** Information about cannabis safety in pregnancy and breastfeeding.

**CDC Marijuana in Pregnancy** The potential health effects of cannabis use during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

**NIH Marijuana Safety in Pregnancy or Breastfeeding** Statistics and information on the endocannabinoid system, health effects, the role of poly-drug use, the perception of safety and recommendations.

## Opioids

**Alliance for Innovation in Maternal Health** Best practices around maternal health conditions and strategies.

**SAMHSA** Collaborative approach to the treatment of people who are pregnant with opioid use disorder.

## Free Vermont Support Services

**VT Helplink** Centralized alcohol and drug support center. Free, confidential information and referrals to treatment and recovery programs.

**802Quits** Tobacco cessation resource with free tips, tools and services online, by phone, or text to help adults quit smoking, vaping or using other forms of tobacco.

**Help Me Grow** Program for healthy child development providing support and education to parents, caregivers and health care professionals. Offers connections to community resources.