

Tobacco

Drug Information;

There are many chemicals in tobacco, including ammonia, cyanide and phenol. Some of the chemicals include carbon monoxide and tar, and have been proven to cause cancer. Nicotine is the addictive ingredient in cigarettes.

Effects on Pregnancy;

Tobacco smoking is associated with reduced oxygen supply and blood flow to the fetus. Nicotine increases your heart rate and your baby's heart rate. It causes your blood vessels to narrow, reducing the flow of blood through the umbilical cord. To prepare for breathing after birth, your unborn baby will be practicing by exercising some of its chest muscles. Nicotine causes a reduction of these breathing movements.

Carbon monoxide replaces oxygen in your blood, so the amount of oxygen made available to your baby through the umbilical cord and placenta is reduced when you smoke.

Smoking in pregnancy is linked to spontaneous abortion, low birth weight and premature birth. The fewer cigarettes you smoke during pregnancy, the better for the baby. Birth weight is less likely to be affected if you stop smoking by the fourth month of pregnancy.

Counselling;

Smoking during pregnancy can affect your unborn baby. Counselling can assist you to cope with withdrawal symptoms. Encourage your partner to consider quitting too.

Pregnancy Care;

As soon as you know you are pregnant, you should seek assistance to reduce or quit smoking from your health care provider. Nicotine replacement therapy (eg. patches and gum) can be used in pregnancy. Discuss this with your doctor or midwife.

Nausea, vomiting and constipation commonly occur in pregnancy. Speak with your midwife or doctor - they may refer you to a dietitian.

Eating well during pregnancy and whilst you are breastfeeding is important for the health of you and your baby.

You may need dietary supplements such as iron, multivitamins and calcium throughout your pregnancy. All women should take folate before conceiving and for at least three months of their pregnancy.

Breastfeeding;

Nicotine passes rapidly into breast milk and can hinder milk supply. Babies exposed to nicotine from breast milk and from passive smoking are associated with increased respiratory tract infections, vomiting, diarrhoea and increased irritability. It is better to breastfeed and smoke than not breastfeed at all. Try to avoid smoking at least half an hour before breast feeding.

Parental smoking significantly increases the risk of sudden infant death syndrome. You should not smoke inside your house if you have infants or children.

Infant Development;

With the exception of alcohol, it is very difficult to prove that drug use in pregnancy results in any permanent long term behavioral or learning problems in children as they grow up.

Most research suggests that if a child is raised in a caring and supportive family environment, they will do as well at school as any other child in similar circumstances. However, alcohol consumption during pregnancy is a very different problem. Evidence suggests that regular daily consumption of more than one standard drink per day during pregnancy may result in obvious behavioral and learning problems in children that can persist into adult life. The more alcohol that is consumed during pregnancy, the more likely it is that the child will experience significant long term learning and behavioral problems.

The combined use of alcohol and drugs, particularly cannabis and cocaine, is an especially high risk situation.

Care of Infant;

Smoking, and the effects of passive smoking, is associated with an increased risk of SIDS and the development of asthma and breathing conditions in children. Please refer to SIDS information below.

It is important that you provide a smoke free environment for your baby at all times.

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome;

SIDS is the sudden unexpected death of a baby from no known cause. It is the most common cause of death for infants in Australia between the ages of one and twelve months. The risk of SIDS is greater if you smoke or use drugs and alcohol during pregnancy or after your baby is born.

For more information, speak with your midwife or doctor or contact SIDS and Kids by phoning, for the cost of a local call, 1300 308 307 or log on to <http://www.sidsandkids.org>

Other services;

DirectLine is part of Turning Point's statewide telephone service network, providing 24-hour, seven day counselling, information and referral to alcohol and drug treatment and support services throughout Victoria. DirectLine is a free, anonymous and confidential service. Phone: 1800 888 236

Quit www.quit.org.au - a site to help you quit or help you find out more about how smoking harms you.