

# Myths and Misconceptions About Cannabis Use

## During Pregnancy & Chest/Breastfeeding

**Authors:** Christine Gold, Erica Wymore, & Laurie Halmo  
On behalf of the Colorado Hospital Substance Exposed Newborns Quality Improvement Collaborative Steering Committee

**Colorado Chapter**

American Academy of Pediatrics  
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



### 1. Cannabis is legal, so it is safe to use while pregnant and/or chest/ breastfeeding.



#### FACT:

Just because cannabis is legal does not mean it is safe to use while pregnant or chest/breastfeeding. Alcohol and tobacco are also legal but are not safe during pregnancy or while nursing. Using cannabis during pregnancy or chest/breastfeeding can cause many problems. These include having smaller babies, babies born early who need longer hospital stays, babies having trouble feeding, and kids having trouble in school with attention and learning later on.

### 2. Scientists aren't 100% sure if using cannabis during pregnancy or chest/breast-feeding is harmful, so it's safe to use while pregnant and/or nursing.



#### FACT:

We know that cannabis can pass from the mother to the baby through the placenta and breast milk. Studies have shown that using cannabis while pregnant or chest/breastfeeding can lead to babies being born early, being smaller in size, and having problems with brain development, which can affect their learning, attention, and behavior.

### 3. Cannabis is a plant, so it is safer and better than medications for treating things like nausea, poor appetite, depression, or anxiety during pregnancy.



#### FACT:

While It is true that some medicines are not safe to use during pregnancy or while chest/breastfeeding, many natural things can be harmful too. Cannabis products are not regulated like medicines, can be contaminated, and are not safe while pregnant or breastfeeding. However, many safe medicines can help with nausea, anxiety, depression, or low appetite. Talk to your doctor to find safer options.

In Partnership with

**CH<sub>0</sub>SEN**

#### 4. My milk won't have cannabis in it as soon as I stop using it.

**FACT:**

The main chemical in cannabis that makes people feel high is called THC. THC gets into breast milk and is found in much higher amounts in breast milk than in the blood (8-10 times more). THC stays in breast milk for a long time, up to 6 weeks after someone stops using it, and it changes the milk. We do not know how long it takes for breast milk to be safe after using cannabis.

#### 5. Cannabis isn't addictive, so it will be easy for me to stop using if I want to.

**FACT:**

Cannabis addiction can happen. Many people who want to stop using cannabis might find it hard to quit on their own. If you have tried to cut back or stop using cannabis and had trouble, you might have a cannabis use disorder. Talk to your doctor for help with quitting or using less.

## How YOU can have a safe and healthy pregnancy and baby:

- ▶ Try to stop or use less of any substances, including cannabis, while pregnant or chest/breastfeeding to protect your baby. Talk to your doctor for help.
- ▶ Keep all cannabis products stored safely, up high, and out of sight from children.
- ▶ If you do use cannabis, make sure you have a safe and sober person to take care of your baby.
- ▶ Always practice safe sleep habits for infants:
  - Use a separate, flat sleep space for the baby, and always place the baby on their back to sleep.
  - Do not sleep with your baby if you are impaired or feeling 'high'.



SCAN HERE  
FOR MORE  
RESOURCES

*This project is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of award numbers OT380000282 and U2DMC32394 with 100% percentage financed with nongovernmental sources. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by CDC, HRSA, HHS or the U.S. Government.*