

Starting Healthcare Conversations: Cannabis, Pregnancy, and Breastfeeding/Chestfeeding



If you're pregnant, breastfeeding/chestfeeding, planning a pregnancy or even just thinking about it, you may have questions about cannabis. Talking with a healthcare provider can help you make informed decisions for yourself and your baby. Partners and co-parents can also play an important role in supporting these conversations, helping to make decisions and access support together.

Some people feel unsure, uncomfortable or worried about having these conversations, especially if they've felt judged or misunderstood in the past. These conversation starters are meant to support you in asking questions in a way that feels safe and helpful.



Tips for the conversation

- You can ask general questions without sharing personal details.
- It's okay to be uncertain or to ask about topics that don't have a clear or simple answer.
- You don't have to address everything at once; this can be an ongoing conversation.
- A lot of information can be hard to take in — consider taking notes or bringing a support person.
- Consider sending this document to your healthcare provider before your appointment so they can prepare to respond to questions in a supportive way.
- Healthcare providers might be working without specialized training on cannabis, and research in this area is still emerging, so it can be helpful to explore options and additional resources as a team.



Introducing the topic

...if you want to start the conversation but are unsure how

- I'd like to understand what we know and what we don't know about how cannabis use during pregnancy or breastfeeding/chestfeeding affects health.
- I know people have different experiences and needs when it comes to cannabis, and I want to make informed decisions without feeling judged. I'm hoping you can help me understand the options and risks in my situation.
- What's your approach to talking about substance use during pregnancy?
- I use cannabis to help manage [symptom or condition]. Can we discuss what other options or supports may be available during pregnancy or breastfeeding/chestfeeding?



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Financial contribution:
Contribution financière :



Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé
publique du Canada



“Asking for a friend”

...if you want guidance but aren't ready to talk about your own cannabis use

- Can you explain how health can be affected by things like how much cannabis is used, how often or how strong it is?
- What do you usually suggest to people who use cannabis for nausea, sleep, pain, or anxiety and want to cut back or make changes during pregnancy?
- What if someone isn't ready or able to stop using cannabis completely? How do you usually approach that?
- Are there ways to lower the risks if someone is using cannabis?
- What do you suggest for people who are trying to make changes gradually?
- What if people at home don't agree with decisions made about cannabis use during pregnancy or breastfeeding/chestfeeding? What kind of support is available?
- What if someone's beliefs conflict with the clinical recommendations? How can you support them in making a decision that respects those beliefs while considering their health and the health of their baby?



Questions to clarify documentation and confidentiality

...if you have questions about privacy, what gets written down or when information might need to be shared about your cannabis use

- Before I share about cannabis use, can you explain how confidentiality works in this situation?
- What information about cannabis use will be documented in my medical record?
- Who can access that information?
- Are there situations where information I share would need to be shared with someone else?
- If you ever had concerns about my safety or my baby's safety, how would you discuss those concerns with me?



Questions for after you've talked about cannabis use

...that can help you keep the relationship strong and conversation open

- What should my next steps be based on our conversation today?
- What can I expect as next steps from you based on our conversation today?
- Can we keep this as an ongoing conversation?
- Where do you recommend I get reliable information about cannabis, pregnancy and breastfeeding/chestfeeding outside of these conversations?
- What services or supports are available if I decide I want extra help?

You should expect respectful, evidence informed care and conversations that are free from judgment. This may not have always been the case for you, but asking questions or sharing concerns about cannabis during pregnancy or breastfeeding/chestfeeding is a reasonable part of caring for your health and your baby's health. These conversations can help your healthcare provider meet you where you are with honesty, compassion and support.

For more information on cannabis, pregnancy and breastfeeding/chestfeeding, check out:

- [Thinking about using cannabis before or during pregnancy? - Canada.ca](#)
- [Cannabis – Pregnancy Info](#) (Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada)
- [Your Questions about Cannabis, Pregnancy and Breastfeeding/Chestfeeding](#) (Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction)
- [Get help with substance use - Canada.ca](#)
- [Cannabis and Indigenous Women's Reproductive Health and Wellness: Resource List - CEWH Cannabis Hub](#)



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