

YOUR QUESTIONS

Cannabis, Pregnancy and Breastfeeding/Chestfeeding

Many people have questions about cannabis use during pregnancy and breastfeeding/chestfeeding. You're not alone and it's okay to ask.



If I'm pregnant...

Q Is there a safe amount of cannabis use?

No. There is no known safe amount of cannabis that can be used during pregnancy. There's not yet enough research to say what amount or type could be safe, if any. We do know that cannabis use can affect the developing baby.

Q Are edibles or vaping safer than smoking cannabis?

No. There are risks to you and the fetus when consuming edibles or vaping. Smoking and vaping both involve inhaling substances into the lungs, which can irritate the airways and expose you to harmful chemicals. The effects of edible cannabis products can take longer to be felt and are more difficult to predict, which can lead to taking more than intended. No matter how cannabis is used, THC and CBD enter your bloodstream and can reach your baby.

Q Can cannabis transfer to the fetus?

Yes. The components of cannabis (like THC and CBD) are carried through the bloodstream and cross the placenta, reaching the fetus.

Q Can cannabis affect the fetus's or baby's development?

Yes. Using cannabis during pregnancy can increase health risks for both you and your fetus or baby. Some studies suggest it may affect a child's brain development, behaviour, learning and mental health. These effects can last into adolescence and early adulthood, especially when cannabis has been used often (such as daily) during pregnancy. For more information, check out: [Clearing the Smoke on Cannabis: Cannabis Use During Pregnancy and Breastfeeding by the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction \(CCSA\)](#)

Cannabis, THC and CBD

Cannabis — sometimes called pot, weed or marijuana — is a plant that contains more than 100 chemical compounds called cannabinoids. The two most well-known cannabinoids are delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and cannabidiol (CBD). THC is the main component of cannabis that makes people feel “high.” CBD does not produce a “high,” but it can cause drowsiness.

Q Can cannabis be used to treat morning sickness (nausea and vomiting) or other health conditions (such as pain, anxiety or poor sleep)?

Cannabis is not recommended to treat morning sickness or other health concerns such as pain, anxiety, or poor sleep during pregnancy because of potential risks to you and your fetus or baby. A healthcare provider can help you find safer options for managing symptoms like nausea by suggesting other medications or strategies such as eating small meals or a salty snack to settle your stomach and staying hydrated (check out [Nausea and vomiting – Pregnancy Info](#)).

Q Is medical cannabis safer than recreational cannabis during pregnancy?

Cannabis used for medical purposes still contains substances like THC and CBD that can reach your fetus or baby. While it may be recommended for certain health conditions, this doesn't mean it's safe or risk-free during pregnancy. A healthcare provider can help you explore options and determine what may be most appropriate for your situation.



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If I'm breastfeeding/chestfeeding...

Q Does cannabis pass to my baby through breast milk?

Yes. Cannabis compounds can be stored in the body's fat cells for weeks and passed through breast milk to the baby.

Q Is there a safe amount of cannabis use?

There isn't enough research to know whether there is any safe amount of cannabis use while breastfeeding/chestfeeding. THC in breast milk may affect the baby's development so it's safest to avoid it if you are breastfeeding/chestfeeding or planning to breastfeed/chestfeed.

Q Can I "pump and dump" breast milk when using cannabis?

No, cannabis can remain in the body for a long time and show up in breast milk for weeks. Because of this, "pumping and dumping" does not help to reduce your baby's exposure.

Q Is it okay to smoke cannabis around my baby?

Like cigarette smoke, breathing in cannabis smoke can expose you and your baby to harmful chemicals. It's best to avoid second-hand smoke, especially indoors or in enclosed spaces.



What are some reasons someone may decide to use cannabis during pregnancy or breastfeeding/chestfeeding?

Reasons for using cannabis are different from person to person. Some people use cannabis before they know they are pregnant. Others use cannabis to help manage symptoms like nausea, anxiety, sleep difficulties or chronic pain. Some may believe cannabis is safer or more effective than other medications they have used before pregnancy. For others, stopping or reducing cannabis use may be difficult because of cannabis dependence or cannabis use disorder. Exploring reasons for cannabis use with a healthcare provider can help you get the information you need to make informed choices about your health and the health of your baby.



What is my partner or co-parent's role in cannabis decisions?

Sometimes it can feel like the pregnant person carries most of the responsibility of making decisions around health and safety during pregnancy and breastfeeding/chestfeeding. However, partners or co-parents can play an important role, too. They can help create a smoke-free environment and provide practical and emotional support when making decisions about health and well-being. Making changes to cannabis use together can be easier on both of you and help you feel like a team in supporting the healthy development of your baby.



If I use cannabis and I am pregnant (or might become pregnant) or breastfeeding/chestfeeding, what should I do?

Avoiding cannabis use when pregnant and breastfeeding/chestfeeding is safest for your health and your baby's health. If you use cannabis regularly, you might experience temporary withdrawal symptoms when you stop, which can last up to a few weeks. Support is available from healthcare providers, psychologists, counsellors, addiction specialists, and other qualified professionals who can help you navigate these changes and access appropriate resources.

If stopping completely isn't possible, here are some steps that may help lower risk:

- Using less cannabis
- Using cannabis products with less THC
- Using cannabis less often
- Buying only legal cannabis products
- Not driving during or after using cannabis
- Not mixing cannabis with other substances such as alcohol
- Not smoking in closed spaces with other people

While research hasn't yet shown a safe amount, less is better.

Being pregnant, breastfeeding/chestfeeding, and being a new parent isn't easy, and you may be overwhelmed by all the decisions you need to make to keep your child safe. If you are pregnant, thinking about getting pregnant or have questions, talk with a healthcare provider about cannabis use. They can recommend resources and provide guidance based on your specific situation.

Not sure how to start the conversation? Check out [Starting Healthcare Conversations: Cannabis, Pregnancy, and Breastfeeding](#) (CCSA).

More resources

For more information on cannabis and pregnancy, check out:

- [Thinking about using cannabis before or during pregnancy? - Canada.ca](#)
- [Cannabis - Pregnancy Info](#)
- [Preconception - Pregnancy Info](#)

For research on cannabis and pregnancy, check out:

[Clearing the Smoke on Cannabis: Cannabis Use During Pregnancy and Breastfeeding \(CCSA\)](#)

For information on postpartum depression and anxiety, check out:

[Mental health and postpartum depression – Pregnancy Info](#)



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