



Marijuana, Pregnancy and Breastfeeding Facts

What is Marijuana?

Marijuana is made from dried leaves and flowers from the hemp plant – cannabis sativa. Smoking is the most common way people use marijuana, though it can be used in other forms such as edibles, powders and oils. The active ingredient in marijuana is tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), and is usually what causes people to get/feel “high.” In Colorado, both medical and retail marijuana are legal. Medical marijuana is marijuana used to treat some medical conditions. Retail marijuana is for personal use.

What happens when I use marijuana?

Signs and symptoms of marijuana use can be different for everyone. Some common signs include:

- Fast heart rate
- Increased blood pressure
- Red eyes
- Dry mouth
- Increased appetite or “the munchies”
- Poor coordination
- Slowed reaction time

These effects are usually reduced after three to four hours.

Can I smoke marijuana while I am pregnant?

There is no known safe amount of marijuana during pregnancy.

Using marijuana while pregnant can be harmful for an unborn baby. Marijuana that passes to your baby during pregnancy may make it hard for your child to pay attention and learn, especially as your child grows older. This could make school harder for them.

Can I use marijuana and breastfeed my baby?

Everything that a mother eats, drinks, or smokes enters breast milk.

- If a woman is breastfeeding, THC and other chemicals will get into the breast milk and may affect the baby. The THC can move into the baby’s fat tissue, as well as into the brain.

Marijuana use is not recommended for anyone while pregnant or breastfeeding.

- Some people think that using a vape pen or eating marijuana is safer than smoking it, but marijuana in any form may be unsafe for your baby as it still contains THC.

Can I “pump and dump” my breast milk?

Because THC is stored in body fat it stays in your body for a long time. This means that “pumping and dumping” your breast milk will not work the same way it does with alcohol. Alcohol is not stored in fat and leaves the body faster than marijuana.

Can I use marijuana around my children if I am not breastfeeding?

- Marijuana can make people feel very sleepy when they are high, and this may affect how a parent interacts with their child.
- Parents who use marijuana may not be fully aware of the infant’s basic needs such as when they are hungry, need a diaper change, or just want to be cuddled.
- Times to play or read to your baby may be missed. These activities are a very important way that children begin to learn about the world around them.

If you plan to use marijuana, make sure there is someone who can safely care for your baby. It is not safe to drive while high. Do not let your baby ride in a car if the driver is high.

How can I safely store marijuana?

It is important to keep all marijuana products in child-resistant packaging and locked out of sight and reach of children.

What happens if my child eats or drinks marijuana by accident?

Marijuana can make children very sick. Contact your doctor if your child is having trouble walking, sitting up or difficulty breathing. **Call the poison control hotline at 1-800-222-1222, or 9-1-1 immediately if you are worried about your child’s safety.**

SOURCES:

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment,
Denver Health, Denver Public Health



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