

**Tip 5: Boost your health by avoiding harmful substances during pregnancy, such as alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.**

What is healthy for you is healthy for your baby. Substance use ([alcohol](#), drugs, [cigarettes](#), [marijuana](#), etc.) and/or substance misuse (taking medications differently than prescribed) can be harmful to a pregnancy and infants who are breastfeeding.\* The best way to keep yourself, your pregnancy, and your baby healthy is to avoid substance use and to take prescription and over the counter medications only as directed while trying to get pregnant, throughout pregnancy, and while breastfeeding. If you are already pregnant, it is not too late to get help. The earlier you can stop or cut back, the better.



It is important to discuss all medication and substance use with your healthcare providers. Sometimes it can feel too hard to stop using or misusing substances. At other times, abruptly stopping substances might cause withdrawal symptoms. You do not need to go through this process alone. There are health professionals who can provide medical help, guidance and support. One such resource is The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). They run a free and confidential National Helpline, that is available around the clock (in English and Spanish) for individuals and families facing mental and/or substance use disorders. You can also visit their [website](#) for information and resources.

For additional local resources, please refer to your state/county health resources or help us fill in our Tip Resources Map. \*If you would like more information on substance use and adverse pregnancy and birth outcomes, please refer to the table below.

How can substance use disorder affect my pregnancy?	
Below is a list of potential complications that can happen if there is a substance use / misuse disorder. There is no known safe 'level' or amounts for use in a pregnancy. However, there are also reports of babies who are born without serious health problems. You can help to improve outcomes just by talking to your healthcare providers about your exposures.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Infertility</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Low birth weight</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Miscarriage</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stillbirth</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Birth defects</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• SIDS</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Poor growth</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Withdrawal symptoms / neonatal abstinence syndrome</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Preterm delivery</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Learning problems / developmental delay</li></ul>
Talk with a healthcare provider and MotherToBaby to learn more about your specific exposures.	

**Social Media:**

**What is healthy for you is also healthy for your baby. Reduce or eliminate the use of harmful substances during pregnancy (including #alcohol & #tobacco) to minimize harmful effects on your baby. #HealthyCommunitiesHealthyBabies #NBDAM**