

# How Drugs and Alcohol can Affect your Baby

---

If you smoke, use drugs or drink alcohol, your baby uses them too. There is no safe way to use these things when you are going to have a baby. Here is a list of drugs and how they can harm your baby:

**Cigarettes** can cause the baby to be born early or small, make it hard for the baby to breathe and even result in death. It can cause heart problems and make it hard for the child to learn in school and get along with others.

**Alcohol** causes the baby to be born small and affects the baby's ability to eat, sleep, see and hear. It makes it hard for the child to get along with others and additional care for the child from doctors may be needed.

**Cocaine and Marijuana** make it hard for the child to learn and get along with others.

**Meth** can cause the baby to be born small, make it hard for the child to learn in school and cause the child to have negative feelings.

## Stress can Harm your Baby

Feeling stressed while pregnant can harm your baby. Problems like fights with family, not having enough money, being hurt by someone in your house or a loved one being sick can cause stress. When you feel stress, there are changes in your body. These changes can cause problems for the baby. Here are some of the problems your baby may have because of stress:

- Baby born early
- Baby born small
- Hard for child to learn
- Hard for child to move
- Has bad feelings more than other kids

## How to Feel Better During Pregnancy

- Talk to friends and family about how you feel.
- Talk to your doctor about how you feel. Your doctor can give you tips for feeling better.
- Take deep breaths or play some soft music.
- Write down your thoughts and feelings.
- If you are working, come up with a plan for when you will be away. Talk to your boss about what work you can handle while pregnant.
- Talk to your doctor about safe exercise.
- If you begin to feel sad or down, talk to your doctor. Your doctor can help you find a person to talk to about your problems.
- Ask for help from friends and family so you can have more time to rest.
- Take time to rest and do fun things.

## References:

---

<http://dana.org/Cerebrum/Default.aspx?id=39474>

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2777887/>

<http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/topics-in-brief/prenatal-exposure-to-drugs-abuse>

<http://www.marchofdimes.com/pregnancy/stress-and-pregnancy.aspx#>

[http://womenshealth.about.com/cs/pregnancy/a/mispregstress\\_3.htm](http://womenshealth.about.com/cs/pregnancy/a/mispregstress_3.htm)



1-866-769-3085

TDD/TTY 1-855-742-0123

[nhhealthyfamilies.com](http://nhhealthyfamilies.com)