

Prenatal Education

Key Messages for Ontario



Smoking

Key Messages

Quitting smoking is a healthy choice for you and your baby.

Stopping smoking before pregnancy, or as early as possible in pregnancy, will help you and your baby.

Smoking is harmful to pregnant women and their babies. Smoking can cause complications during pregnancy. It can cause babies to be born too soon or too small. When babies are born too soon or too small, they are more likely to have serious health problems. The risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome is greater in babies whose mothers smoked during pregnancy.

The more you smoke the greater the risk to your health and your baby's health. Not smoking at all while you are pregnant is best for your health and your baby's health. If you are pregnant, stop smoking if you can. If you can't quit, consider smoking fewer cigarettes to reduce the harm to you and your baby.

Help is available if you want to quit smoking or cut down.

Quitting smoking is a healthy choice for you and your baby. It is helpful to have support when trying to quit smoking. Ask for help from family or friends. Invite them to quit with you if they smoke. If you have trouble quitting, or feel the urge to smoke again after you have quit, talk to your health care provider. There are services for women, and their families, who want to stop smoking (see the section Learn more about where to get help).

Talk to your health care provider before using nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) products.

Many products, such as lozenges, gum, inhalers, and patches contain nicotine that may help you quit smoking. Start by trying to quit smoking without nicotine products. There are groups, telephone helplines, online supports, and one-on-one services for pregnant women to help you quit smoking. If these do not work for you, your health care provider can help decide if nicotine replacement therapy is right for you.

E-cigarettes have not been tested for use during pregnancy.

E-cigarettes may cause health problems and have not been tested for safety during pregnancy.

Provide a smoke-free home for you and your baby.

Second-hand smoke is the smoke you breathe if you or someone else is smoking. Third-hand smoke is made up of the chemicals that remain on clothing, skin, carpets, furniture, and other items that are exposed to smoke.

Second-hand and third-hand smoke are harmful, especially for pregnant women and young children. Smoke-free spaces are the healthy choice for pregnant women, parents, babies, and children. A smoke-free home and car can decrease the risk of your baby dying from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Your baby will be less likely to have ear infections and breathing problems (such as bronchitis or asthma) if you avoid second-hand smoke.

Here are some ways to lower the amount of second-hand and third-hand smoke for you and your baby:

- ▶ Make a rule that smoking is not allowed in your home or car.
- ▶ Ask people not to smoke around pregnant women, babies, and children.
- ▶ Keep doors and windows closed when someone is smoking outside.
- ▶ Ask people who smoke to wash their hands before holding your baby.
- ▶ Ask people who smoke to change their outer clothing after smoking.

Breastfeed your baby even if you smoke.

Breastfeeding is the best way to feed your baby, even if you smoke. The benefits of breastfeeding outweigh the harmful effects of tobacco on the baby's health. Breastfeeding can also be relaxing for you.

One of the most important things you can do is breastfeed your baby. To protect your baby you can also:

- ▶ Have a smoke-free home and a smoke-free car.
- ▶ Cut down on the number of cigarettes that you smoke.
- ▶ Change your outer clothing before breastfeeding if you have smoked.
- ▶ Wash your hands before breastfeeding if you have smoked.
- ▶ Smoke after feedings rather than right before.

Learn more about where to get help.

You can find out more about smoking and how to quit from the following resources.

- ▶ Your health care provider
- ▶ Your local public health unit 1-866-532-3161
- ▶ Smokers' Helpline 1-877-513-5333
www.smokershelpline.ca
- ▶ Motherisk Alcohol and Substance Use Helpline 1-877-327-4636
www.motherisk.org/women/contactUs.jsp
- ▶ PREGNETS
www.pregnets.org
- ▶ Expecting to Quit
www.expectingtoquit.ca
- ▶ oMama
www.omama.com