

9062 - Smoking and Pregnancy



Smoking while pregnant results in serious risks for both the woman and the fetus. Cigarette smoking by pregnant girls and women has been shown to increase risks of complications in pregnancy and to cause serious adverse fetal outcomes including:

- low birth weight
- still births
- spontaneous abortions
- decreased fetal growth
- premature births
- placental abruption
- sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)



Other reproduction related effects of smoking include lower estrogen levels leading to early menopause and links to infertility.

How Are Unborn Babies Affected?

- Nicotine, carbon monoxide and other chemicals in tobacco smoke are passed on to the baby through the placenta.
- Nicotine increases a baby's heart rate and breathing movements. Some of the chemicals passed on through the mother's blood are known to cause cancer.
- During pregnancy, smokers have a greater risk of miscarriages. During the birth, they are more likely to have complications.
- A slowdown in the growth of the fetus. Babies of women who smoked or were exposed to second-hand tobacco smoke during pregnancy are, on average, smaller at birth than babies of non-smoking mothers.
- Babies born with a lower-than-average birth weight are more likely to get infections and have other health problems
- Infant mortality rate at birth is increased
- More than 18% of all deaths from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) are due to maternal tobacco use.
- Even in later years, children of mothers who smoked during pregnancy tend to be slightly shorter than other children and have more difficulty with reading, mathematics and related skills.

Quitting

Quitting smoking during pregnancy is worth it. It has considerable positive health impact for both the mother and unborn child, and reduces health problems for children born of women who smoke.

For help in quitting: 1-800 Quit Lines

