

## What Parents Need to Know About Maternal Cannabis Use During Pregnancy

**Many pregnant individuals report using cannabis (also called marijuana) during pregnancy to help with nausea, vomiting, stress, sleep problems, or pain.**

This makes it the most commonly used federally illegal substance in pregnancy. Cannabis contains many compounds, but the 2 most common are tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and cannabidiol (CBD). THC is the part that causes a "high," while CBD does not have this effect. Many major health organizations, including the US Surgeon General, recommend that pregnant and breastfeeding individuals avoid cannabis use. This is because current research suggests it may pose risks to both the parent and the baby.

### Prenatal, Long-Term, Breastfeeding, and Paternal Use Effects

Cannabis use during pregnancy has been linked to several health concerns for pregnant individuals, including an increased risk of pregnancy-related anemia (low red blood cell count), diabetes, high blood pressure and preeclampsia, mood disorders such as anxiety or depression, and nausea and vomiting. Although some people use cannabis to help with nausea, it can actually make symptoms worse. Cannabis use during pregnancy may affect how a baby grows and develops. Studies have linked use to a higher risk of low birth weight, being born early (preterm birth), and being smaller than expected. Some studies also suggest higher risks of stillbirth, needing care in the neonatal intensive care unit, or infant death. Using cannabis more often or in higher amounts may increase these risks, especially when combined with use of tobacco or any kind of nicotine. We are still learning about the long-term effects of cannabis use during pregnancy. Some studies suggest it may be linked to behavioral problems, trouble paying attention, learning problems, hyperactivity, and conditions such as autism spectrum disorder or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

THC can pass into breast milk and reach the baby. Some studies suggest this may affect brain development. THC can stay in the body for up to 6 days because it is stored in fat and released slowly. This means the baby may still be exposed to THC even after cannabis use stops.

Cannabis use by the father before pregnancy may also affect the baby. Some studies suggest links to miscarriage, low infant birth weight, infant death, and behavior problems in children, even if the pregnant individual does not use cannabis.

### Bottom Line

There is no known safe amount of cannabis to use during pregnancy or while breastfeeding. Studies suggest cannabis may in-

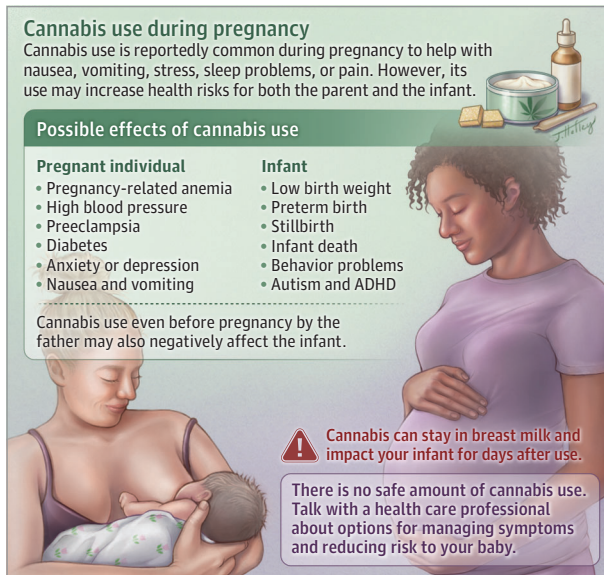
#### Cannabis use during pregnancy

Cannabis use is reportedly common during pregnancy to help with nausea, vomiting, stress, sleep problems, or pain. However, its use may increase health risks for both the parent and the infant.

#### Possible effects of cannabis use

| Pregnant individual                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Infant                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pregnancy-related anemia</li> <li>• High blood pressure</li> <li>• Preeclampsia</li> <li>• Diabetes</li> <li>• Anxiety or depression</li> <li>• Nausea and vomiting</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low birth weight</li> <li>• Preterm birth</li> <li>• Stillbirth</li> <li>• Infant death</li> <li>• Behavior problems</li> <li>• Autism and ADHD</li> </ul> |

Cannabis use even before pregnancy by the father may also negatively affect the infant.



crease risks for both the parent and the baby. If you and/or your partner are planning a pregnancy, are pregnant, or are breastfeeding, talk with your health care professional about cannabis use. They can recommend safer ways to manage symptoms. If someone continues to use cannabis, risk may be reduced by using less and not as often, avoiding high-THC products, and not combining it with nicotine use.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Systematically Testing the Evidence on Marijuana  
<https://www.cannabisevidence.org>

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
<https://www.acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/clinical-consensus/articles/2025/10/cannabis-use-during-pregnancy-and-lactation>

MotherToBaby  
<https://mothertobaby.org>

March of Dimes  
<https://www.marchofdimes.org/find-support/topics/pregnancy/marijuana-and-pregnancy>

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**Conflict of Interest Disclosures:** None reported.

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