

- *No amount of drug use is safe. Lifelong effects to the fetus can occur after just one use of any drug.*
- *According to a 2003 Centers for Disease Control Study, nearly 3% of pregnant women use illicit drugs. Of those pregnant women who use, 70% do not disclose their usage to their doctors.*
- *Rates of drug usage in pregnant women were similar among Caucasians, African Americans and Hispanics.*
- *Some of the effects to the fetus are as followed:*
 - Tobacco:
 - Hindered fetal growth
 - Nicotine depresses the appetite therefore the fetus is not getting proper nutrition
 - Lungs are not able to absorb oxygen
 - Higher risk for children developing asthma as well as sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)
 - Heroin and other Narcotics:
 - Premature birth therefore low birth weight
 - Breathing difficulties
 - Low blood sugar
 - Bleeding within the head
 - Increased chance of baby being born addicted, which means baby could:
 - Experience withdrawal symptoms
 - Experience long term behavioral and learning problems
 - Cocaine and Methamphetamines:
 - Increased heart rate and blood pressure
 - Higher risks of miscarriage, premature labor, and a condition that causes internal bleeding in the mother
 - Increased chance of baby being born addicted, which means baby could:
 - Experience withdrawal symptoms
 - Experience long term behavioral and learning problems
 - Studies regarding marijuana use among pregnant women yield inconclusive results since marijuana is commonly used with ATOD.
 - Possible complications include:
 - Slowed fetal growth
 - Higher risk of premature labor

- *Drug exposed children are more likely to become drug users themselves.*
- *A pregnant woman who uses heroin (or another narcotic) should not attempt to quit taking the drug as this would greatly increase the risk of a miscarriage. In order to ensure a safe pregnancy and healthy newborn, the mother should begin taking methadone to keep her and her fetus safe.*
- *Fear of prosecution and the potential loss of their children do not keep pregnant women from using drugs; it only keeps them from seeking proper prenatal and medical care.*
- *Many states have adopted child welfare laws that address prenatal and newborn drug exposure.*
- *The only way to guarantee that a child does not have birth defects due to drug use is to quit using drugs before becoming pregnant.*

➤ ***Resources used to produce this Fact Sheet:***

American Council for Drug Education

<http://www.acde.org/parent/Pregnant.htm>

KidsHealth for Parents.

http://www.kidshealth.org/parent/pregnancy_newborn/pregnancy/preg_health.html

Drug Policy Alliance.

<http://www.drugpolicy.org/library/factsheets/women/index.cfm>

March of Dimes

http://www.marchofdimes.com/professionals/14332_1169.asp

Join Together

<http://www.jointogether.org/news/research/summaries/2002/most-pregnant-women-dont-drug.html>

Where can a woman get help in stopping drinking and/or using drugs?

Some women find it difficult to stop abusing substances. These organizations can help:

- Center for Substance Abuse Treatment: National Drug & Alcohol Treatment Referral Service (800) 663-HELP (800-662-4357)
- National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD) 1-800-NCA-CALL (800-622-2255)
- [Alcoholics Anonymous \(AA\)](#)
Local chapters are listed in the white pages of local phone books.
- www.tristate-na.org