

# FAST FACTS:

## Marijuana Use During Pregnancy

- 1 Marijuana contains almost 500 components including tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana, that can pass through the placenta to the baby during pregnancy and harm fetus development.<sup>1</sup>
- 2 The placenta is an organ that develops inside the mother's uterus during pregnancy which functions to provide oxygen and other nutrients to the growing baby. It is also the pathway where substances like marijuana, tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs can pass through to the growing fetus.<sup>2</sup>
- 3 When marijuana is used, regardless of the method (edibles, smoking, or vaping), THC crosses the placenta and travels rapidly to the fetus' brain and fat cells.<sup>2</sup>
- 4 THC binds to receptors within our internal Endocannabinoid system (ECS), which plays a big role in central nervous system development. This means using marijuana during pregnancy can harm the fetus' brain development with long-term effects on cognition and behavior.<sup>2</sup>
- 5 Smoking marijuana exposes both mother and baby to carbon monoxide and other similar poisons found in cigarettes but at much higher concentrations. Marijuana use can lead to a decrease in the mother's oxygen levels, resulting in increased risk for breathing problems and other harmful effects to the developing baby.<sup>2</sup>
- 6 Breastfeeding among heavy marijuana users is particularly dangerous since THC is stored in fat tissues and slowly released over time, exposing the baby even if the mother has stopped using.<sup>3</sup>
- 7 Other negative effects are unknown. Poisons such as pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, and rodenticides are typically used to grow marijuana and can potentially affect the fetus and baby.<sup>2</sup>
- 8 Potency of today's marijuana is significantly higher than what was produced even a decade ago. The full impact of today's high potency products are largely unknown and could lead to additional negative consequences.<sup>2</sup>

### POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following policy recommendation are crucial to provide critical information to consumers, promoting informed decisions and prioritizing the health and well-being of mothers and newborns.

- Enact regulations to strictly prohibit the recommendation or administration of medical marijuana containing any level of THC to pregnant patients in order to safeguard maternal and fetal health.
- Establish mandatory warning labels on all marijuana products distributed within the state, explicitly detailing the potential risks associated with use during pregnancy.
- Establish mandatory displays of prominent warning signs within all marijuana dispensaries, explicitly outlining the risks associated with marijuana usage during pregnancy and postpartum periods.
- Implement a mandatory annual training program for physicians certified to provide medical marijuana recommendations, integrating comprehensive education on the potential risks associated with marijuana use during pregnancy and postpartum periods.

<https://www.marijuanaknowthetruth.org/marijuana-and-pregnancy>

### REFERENCES:

<sup>1</sup>Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (n.d.). *Marijuana and pregnancy*. Retrieved October 6, 2022, from <https://www.samhsa.gov/marijuana/marijuana-pregnancy> <sup>2</sup>Ryan, S. A., Ammerman, S. D., & O'Connor, M. E. AAP Committee on Substance Use and Prevention, AAP Section on Breastfeeding. (2018, September). Marijuana use during pregnancy and breastfeeding: Implications for neonatal and childhood outcomes. *Pediatrics*, 142(3). <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2018-1889> <sup>3</sup>Lo, J. O., Hedges, J. C., & Girardi, G. (2022, October). Impact of cannabinoids on pregnancy, reproductive health, and offspring outcomes. *American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology*, 227(4), 571-581. doi: 10.1016/j.ajog.2022.05.056



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