

# Nicotine and Your Baby

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Every mother wants their baby to be healthy. But using tobacco products (or products with nicotine) while you are pregnant or after the baby is born can be harmful.

## Using Tobacco Products When You Are Pregnant

When you smoke, so does your baby. Smoking or chewing tobacco while you are pregnant can cause harm to you and your baby.



- Your blood vessels carry oxygen and food to your baby. Nicotine from tobacco makes these blood vessels smaller. This causes less blood and oxygen to get to your baby.
- The carbon monoxide in cigarettes is a poisonous gas. Carbon monoxide takes the place of some of the oxygen in your blood. This keeps your baby from getting all the oxygen he or she needs.
- Smoking when you are pregnant can cause the baby to be born:
  - Too small to be healthy (low birth weight)
  - Too early to survive (miscarriage)
  - Early and with many health problems (premature birth)

All tobacco products (including e-cigs, vapes, juuls, cigars and non-smoking tobacco) have nicotine. Nicotine can cross the placenta and cause harm to your babies brain, lung and blood vessel development.

## Using Tobacco Products When You Are Breastfeeding

Smoking or using nicotine containing devices (ENDS) while breastfeeding can cause as much harm as smoking while pregnant.

Breast milk of a mother who is using a tobacco product can have large amounts of nicotine and other by-products of smoking/tobacco in her milk.

- Babies of mom's who smoke and breastfeed can have more nicotine in their blood stream because nicotine levels increase in breast milk!
- Babies of mothers who smoke and breastfeed often don't eat well and gain less weight.
- Babies of mom's who smoke and breastfeed are at higher risks of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and do not get the other important benefits of breast milk such as protection from lung infections and decreased asthma.

## What is Secondhand Smoke?

Secondhand smoke comes from two places:

- The smoke exhaled by a smoker
- The smoke that comes from the burning end of a cigarette, pipe and cigar

Secondhand smoke is filled with more tar, poisonous gases and nicotine than the smoke inhaled by the smoker. People in the same room as a smoker breathe in secondhand smoke, including babies.

## Secondhand Smoke and Your Baby

Secondhand smoke is harmful for babies and young children because their lungs are still growing. Here are some things that can happen when someone smokes around a baby:

- Babies have tiny lungs and airways. Breathing air filled with smoke causes their tiny airways to get even smaller. This can make it harder for babies to breathe.
- Babies and young children breathe much faster than adults. This means they will breathe in more smoke that is in the air than adults.
- Babies of parents who smoke:
  - get more ear infections
  - get more nose, throat and sinus infections
  - get more infections like bronchitis and pneumonia
  - have more tooth decay

Breastfeeding if you are NOT the smoker but live with someone who does smoke (second hand smoke) DOES protect your baby from increased risk of SIDS death, respiratory infections, severe asthma, and repeat ear infections.

Breastfeeding AND smoking does NOT protect your baby and may put them at even higher risk.

***Babies of mothers that smoke have the highest risk factor for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).***

## Secondhand Smoke and Your Child

Children who grow up with parents who smoke are more likely to smoke. Secondhand smoke can cause problems for children later in life, such as:

- Increased learning problems in school
- Aggravation of asthma
- Increased behavioral problems such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

## Protecting Your Child from Secondhand Smoke

- If you smoke, STOP. For help, talk to your doctor. If you use a nicotine patch AND continue to smoke without decreasing the number of cigarettes the amount of nicotine your baby is exposed to can be doubled.
- Make your home and your car smoke free.
- Keep your children away from places where there are smokers.
- Don't use a babysitter that smokes. Only use daycare centers or schools that are smoke free.

*This information was created and reviewed through a partnership with the UAMS Patient and Family Advisory Councils and the UAMS Center for Health Literacy.*

## What is Thirdhand Smoke?

Thirdhand smoke is what's left behind from cigarette, cigar and pipe smoke. It can include lead, arsenic and carbon monoxide. It's what you smell on things like clothes, furniture, carpet, walls and hair that's been in or around smoke. Thirdhand smoke is why opening a window or smoking in another room isn't enough to protect others when you smoke.

If you're pregnant or a new mom, stay away from thirdhand smoke. Babies who breathe in thirdhand smoke may have serious health problems, like asthma and other breathing problems, learning problems and cancer.

## Is it Safe to Use E-Cigarettes/Vape During Pregnancy or around my newborn?

Electronic cigarettes (also called e-cigarettes, e-cigs, vapes or juuls) look like regular cigarettes. But instead of lighting them, they run on batteries or a charge. E-cigarettes contain liquid that includes nicotine, flavors (like cherry or bubble gum) and other chemicals. **Even when an Electronic Nicotine Delivery device (END) says it contains no nicotine, multiple studies show that it has significant amounts.** When you use an e-cigarette, you puff on a mouthpiece to heat up the liquid and create a mist (also called vapor) that you inhale. Using an e-cigarette is called vaping.

More research is needed to better understand how e-cigarettes may affect women and babies during pregnancy. Some studies show that e-cigarette vapor may contain some of the harmful chemicals that are found in regular cigarettes. Flavors and other chemicals, such as nicotine, used in e-cigarettes also may be harmful to a developing baby. If you're pregnant and using e-cigarettes or thinking about using them, talk to your healthcare provider.

Just like regular cigarettes, you can become addicted to e-cigarettes. If you drink, sniff or touch the liquid in e-cigarettes, it can cause nicotine poisoning. If a child or infant eats a juul or e-cigarette they can die or stop breathing. Signs or symptoms of nicotine poisoning include:

- Feeling weak
- Having breathing problems
- Nausea (feeling sick to your stomach)
- Vomiting

Nicotine poisoning can be deadly. Liquid nicotine in e-cigarettes comes in different flavors and is sold in small tubes that may be bright and colorful. This may make e-cigarettes seem fun and appealing, especially to children.

In addition, there is not enough research to tell us if it harmful to your baby once they are born. They can inhale some of the vape that you are exhaling. So please talk to your health care providers before vaping around your baby.

## For More Information:

- Be Well Arkansas at 1-833-283-WELL (9355)
- American Cancer Society Quit Line at 1-800-227-2345 or [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)
- American Lung Association Hotline at 1-800-LUNG-USA or 1-800-586-4872 – check out the “Freedom from Smoking” section of their web site at [www.ffsonline.org](http://www.ffsonline.org)

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# Stop Smoking: For Your Baby's Health

Both you and your baby will benefit when you quit smoking. The benefits for both you and your baby are explained below, as are the key steps to quitting successfully.

## Good Things Happen as Soon as You Quit!

### *Your Baby:*

- Will cough and cry less.
- Will have fewer asthma and wheezing problems.
- Will have fewer colds and ear infections.
- Will have a decreased risk for sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

### *You:*

- Will have more energy and breathe easier.
- Will decrease your risk for cancer, heart disease, stroke and emphysema.
- Will save money that you can spend on other things.
- Will feel good about yourself for quitting.

## Keys for Quitting

### 1. Get Ready

- Think about how quitting will help you and your baby.
- Set a quit date and stick to it – not even a single puff!
- Get rid of ALL cigarettes and ashtrays in your home, car or workplace. Make it hard to get a cigarette.
- Set up smoke-free areas in your home and make your car smoke free.

### 3. Get Support and Encouragement

- Tell your family, friends and coworkers you are quitting and ask for their help.
- Ask smokers not to smoke around you.
- Talk to women who quit smoking when they were pregnant.
- Talk with your prenatal care provider about your plan to quit.

### 2. Learn New Skills and Behaviors

- Try to change some of your daily habits to lower your chances of smoking.
- Plan something fun to do every day.
- Practice new ways to relax.
- When you want to smoke, do something else: find a way to occupy your hands, your mouth and your mind.
- Think about your reasons for quitting.

### 4. Be Prepared to Handle Slips

- If you “slip” and smoke, don’t give up.
- People who quit after they “slip” tell themselves, “This was a mistake, not a failure.”
- Set a new date to get back on track.
- Remember that by quitting, you are protecting your baby’s health and your own.



**Want to Quit?** For free smoking cessation resources, contact:  
SOS Quitline – 1-800-QUIT-NOW  
1-800-784-8669

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# Tips to Help You Cope with Urges to Smoke

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**1. First, remind yourself that you've stopped and you're a non-smoker. Then, look closely at your urge to smoke and ask yourself:**

- Where was I when I got the urge?
- What was I doing at the time?
- Who was I with?
- What was I thinking?

**2. Think about why you've stopped:**

- Repeat to yourself (aloud if you are alone) your three main reasons for stopping.
- Write down your three main reasons for stopping, then three reasons for smoking.

**3. Anticipate triggers and prepare to avoid them:**

- Keep your hands busy – doodle, knit, type a letter.
- Avoid people who smoke; spend more time with non-smoking friends.
- Find activities that make smoking difficult – gardening, exercise, washing the car, taking a shower.
- Put something other than a cigarette in your mouth. Keep oral substitutes handy – try carrots, sunflower seeds, apples, celery, raisins, or sugarless gum instead of a cigarette. Cut a drinking straw into cigarette-sized pieces and inhale air. Use a mouthwash.
- Change your surroundings when the urge hits – get up and move about, or do something else.
- Avoid places where smoking is permitted. Sit in the non-smoking section in restaurants, trains, etc.
- Look at your watch whenever an urge to smoke hits you. You'll find the urge will only last a few minutes.
- Wear a rubber band around your wrist. When you really feel like you want a cigarette, snap the rubber band a few times and say, "STOP." While you do this, picture in your mind a red stop sign. You might try this at home aloud a few times and then do it silently when in public.
- Be prepared for "First Times" as a non-smoker – your first vacation, first time home alone, first long car ride, first period of boredom. If you know you will be in a *high-risk* situation, plan how you will get through it without smoking.

### **4. Change your daily routine in order to break your habits and patterns:**

- After meals, get up from the table; brush your teeth or take a walk.
- Change the order in which you do things, particularly your morning routine.
- Don't sit in your favorite chair.
- Eat your lunch in a different location.

### **5. Use positive thoughts:**

- If self-defeating thoughts start to creep in, remind yourself again that you're a non-smoker, that you don't want to smoke, and that you have good reasons for it.
- Keep a daydream ready to go. For example, start planning a perfect vacation; work on that plan when thoughts about cigarettes start to give you trouble.
- Look around at all the people who don't smoke, including children. Remind yourself that they feel normal and healthy without cigarettes.

### **6. Use relaxation techniques:**

- Breathe in deeply and slowly, while you count to five; breathe out slowly, counting to five again.
- Take ten deep breaths and hold the last one while lighting a match. Exhale slowly and blow out the match. Pretend it's a cigarette, and crush it out in an ashtray.
- If you can't concentrate, don't worry. You'll be able to when you *need* to, when the adrenaline flows.

**THINK POSITIVELY...**  
***You CAN Quit Smoking!***

### **FREE RESOURCES**

#### **SUPPORT GROUP: UAMS 7-Week Smoking Cessation Support Group**

To register, call 501-944-5934 — [plfranklin@uams.edu](mailto:plfranklin@uams.edu)

#### **ON THE PHONE COUNSELING: National Cancer Institute**

1-877-44U-QUIT (877-448-7848) — [smokefree.gov](http://smokefree.gov)

#### **Arkansas Tobacco Quitline**

1-800-QUIT-NOW  
(1-800-784-8669)

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