

Let's
Talk
About...

Smoking and Pregnancy

If you are pregnant, or planning a pregnancy, you might be thinking of changes you can make to improve your health and protect your baby's health. Quitting smoking is a good place to start.

Tobacco smoke contains more than 7,000 chemicals, at least 69 of which have been proven to cause cancer. Carbon monoxide (a toxic gas), nicotine and other harmful chemicals from the smoke enter your bloodstream and pass into your baby's body. These chemicals keep the baby from getting the food and oxygen he or she needs for growth.

Lung cancer remains the leading cause of cancer death for women. In 2012, 720 Alberta women died of lung cancer. Smoking among women is linked to lower fertility, cancer of the cervix, osteoporosis and menstrual and menopausal problems.

Even though most people who smoke know that it is harmful, it can still be hard to quit smoking. That's because nicotine, found in tobacco, is very addictive. Many people need help quitting. Talking to your doctor or pharmacist is a good place to start.

Tobacco smoke contains many harmful chemicals. Carbon monoxide (a toxic gas), nicotine and other harmful chemicals from the smoke enter your bloodstream and pass into your baby's body. These chemicals keep the baby from getting the food and oxygen he or she needs for growth.

If you smoke, the best thing you can do to protect your health, and your baby's health, is to quit. Here are some ways that both you and your baby will benefit when you quit.

Benefits for you


As a mother, you can look forward to

- more money for you to save, or spend on other things
- more energy to do the things you love
- increased health and lower blood pressure and heart rate
- decreased risk of problems during labour and delivery
- setting a good example for your child

Benefits for your baby

When you quit smoking, you will help your baby get the food and oxygen he or she needs. You will also reduce the risk of

- having a miscarriage, or your baby being born too early
- having a stillborn baby
- your baby being born at an unhealthy weight (babies that are too small when they are born have a higher risk for infections and other health problems)
- your baby dying of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS or crib death)
- not having enough breastmilk for your baby



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The good news is that by cutting down and quitting, you can help your baby have a healthy start in life. If you find quitting too difficult, talk to your doctor or pharmacist for additional support.

If your partner smokes, ask for their support. If your partner is willing to, ask them to quit smoking with you. Quitting can be easier if you support each other.

If your partner isn't ready to quit, ask your partner to smoke outside in areas away from windows and doors, away from the children and away from you. If you don't feel safe asking, it's okay to not ask. Try to avoid second-hand smoke.

Baby Steps: A Guide to Help Pregnant and Post-partum Women Quit Smoking is a self-help booklet available to those who would like to reduce harm from using tobacco. To order your copy of this guide or for more information and support, call 1-866-710-QUIT (7848) or visit www.albertaquits.ca.