

# Healthy Moms, Healthy Babies

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service • Oklahoma State University



## *Drugs and Smoking During Pregnancy*

You wouldn't think of giving your baby a cigarette or drugs would you? Did you know that any substance you consume during pregnancy is shared with your developing baby? In fact, many can harm your unborn baby and should be avoided.

Drugs include prescribed medicines, over-the-counter types such as aspirin and cold medicines, and drugs such as nicotine, marijuana and crack.

Prescribed medicines and over-the-counter medicines can harm your unborn baby. Effects differ according to the stage of pregnancy and the amount of drug used. Early pregnancy is an especially critical period of development and drugs taken during this time can cause more harmful effects. **Check with your doctor before taking any medication. Ask your doctor about any medicines or drugs you are taking.**

Illegal drugs such as marijuana, heroin, cocaine, and crack should **never** be taken. They can be extremely harmful to your unborn baby causing problems such as birth defects, miscarriage, premature birth, low birth weight, and can cause your baby to be born addicted.

Smoking while you are pregnant increases the chances your unborn baby may develop health problems. Smoking while pregnant can cause miscarriage, stillbirth, low birth weight (less than 5 1/2 pounds), birth defects, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), and learning and behavioral difficulties. Low birth weight babies may have more health problems. **If you smoke, stop now to protect your baby.**



Since nicotine and other types of drugs can be very addictive, you may need help to stop your drug use. Talk to your doctor or call the County Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse. Their counselors help people with drug and smoking problems. Support groups like Smoke-Enders, Smokers Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, or Pills Anonymous can help you. Look in the phone book or ask your doctor for phone numbers. For the health of your baby, get help NOW.

### **Suggested Readings:**

March of Dimes. *Cocaine use during pregnancy information sheet*. White Plains, NY: Author.

March of Dimes. *Give your baby a healthy start: Stop smoking*. White Plains, NY: Author.

March of Dimes. *Making the right choices: The facts about drugs and pregnancy*. White Plains, NY: Author.

Smith, P., and Coats C. (1988). *How to be perfectly pregnant*. Orlando, FL: Carolyn Coats' Bestsellers.

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Braude, M., Szeto, H., Khun, C., Bero, L., Ignar, D., Field, E., Luric, S., Chasnoff, I., Mendelson, J., Zuckerman, B., Hingson, R., Frank, D., Parker, S., Vinci, R., Kayne, H., Morelock, S., Amaro, H., Kyei-Aboage, K., and Howard, J. (1987). Perinatal effects of drugs of abuse. *Federation Proceedings*, 46, 2446-2453.

Eisenberg, Arlene, Murkoff, Heidi E., and Hathaway, Sandee. E. (1986) *What to eat when you're expecting*. New York: Workman Publishing Company, Inc.

Muscatti, S., Mackey, M., and Newsom, B. (1988). The influence of smoking and stress on prenatal weight gain and infant birth weight of teenage mothers. *Journal of Nutrition Education*, 20, 299-302.



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County Extension Center:***



Prepared by:

Donna-Jean Hunt, M.S., R.D./L.D., EFNEP  
Nutritionist

Emily Joyce, M.S., R.D./L.D., Nutrition  
Education Programs Nutritionist

Beth Ann Fulgenzi, editor and graphic designer

*This material is supported by the Oklahoma  
Nutrition Education (ONE) Program through  
the Oklahoma Department of Human Services  
Food Stamp Program.*

Oklahoma State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture,  
State and Local Governments cooperating. Oklahoma Coop-  
erative Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible  
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6/97