

Dear Expectant Mother and Family:

Congratulations on your pregnancy! Our goal is to support you to have a healthy pregnancy.

It is important to know that any product that is ingested by a pregnant mother has the potential to affect the unborn baby. There are some substances that can have minimal effect, and others that can cause birth defects and even result in still birth. It is important that you talk to your doctor, or provider, about any medications or substances you are taking during your pregnancy. We would like to share with you some information on some risks associated with taking certain prescription medications, using tobacco, street drugs and/or alcohol while pregnant.

Prescription medications for pain or depression/ anxiety: Don't stop taking a prescribed medication until you talk to your doctor or provider. There may be a medical need to continue the medication, or there may be a safer medication that your doctor can prescribe for you to take while you are pregnant. Some medications that are prescribed for you when you are not pregnant can cause problems for your baby if you continue to take them once you become pregnant. Some prescription medications for pain relief, such as Hydrocodone, Oxycodone, OxyContin, Morphine, Fentanyl, Norco, etc., may cause NAS (Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome). This is when the baby has withdrawal symptoms shortly after he/she is born. A mom who takes Methadone or Subutex while pregnant may also have a baby born with NAS symptoms. NAS symptoms may appear 1-6 days after delivery, depending on the medication taken. Babies with NAS symptoms may require care in the NICU (Neonatal Intensive Care Unit) to manage their symptoms.

Cigarettes: Tobacco (cigarettes or e-cigs) use during pregnancy is not recommended. Tobacco use will increase your risk of having a miscarriage, problems with the placenta, premature birth, problems with good growth in the baby, and certain birth defects like cleft lip and cleft palate. Smoking during and after delivery can also increase the risk of your baby having SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome).

Street Drug, including Marijuana: Currently, marijuana is not legal in Kansas. In some nearby states it is legal. However, while it may be legal there, it is still harmful to the growth and development of your unborn baby. Marijuana, or Ganja, use during pregnancy may cause your baby to be born at low birth weight, increase your chance of having a miscarriage, and increase the risk of your baby having learning disabilities.

Other street drugs, such as heroin, cocaine, amphetamines, meth, ecstasy, PCP, LSD, and so on will affect the unborn baby in many ways. Exposure to these drugs puts the unborn baby at risk for: low birth weight; reduced supply of oxygen to the baby that can lead to premature birth or infant death; greater risk for physical disabilities, mental retardation, and learning disabilities.

Alcohol: There is no known safe amount of alcohol use during pregnancy. There is no safe time during pregnancy to drink alcohol. All types of alcohol; wine, beer or liquor, can be equally harmful to the unborn baby. Alcohol use during pregnancy can cause miscarriage, still birth and a range of lifelong physical, behavioral and intellectual disabilities called FASD (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders).

Please note that taking or using any of the above substances may put your baby at risk for having problems that may require your baby to be admitted to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU).

If you are currently using any of these substances or if you have questions about any of this information, please talk to your care team. We want to address your concerns and take steps to reduce the risks to your baby throughout your pregnancy and after delivery!

References:

www.cdc.gov/pregnancy/meds Medications and Pregnancy

www.momjunction.com/articles/drugs-during-pregnancy Harmful Effects of Drugs during Pregnancy

www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/maternalinfanthealth/tobaccousepregnancy Tobacco Use and Pregnancy

www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/fasd/alcohol-use Alcohol Use in Pregnancy