

PREGNANT AND BREASTFEEDING: WOMEN AND OPIOIDS



Consuming opioids (heroin, hydrocodone, morphine, fentanyl, etc.) can affect the health of your baby and is not recommended for women who are pregnant or breastfeeding, or who plan to become pregnant soon. Here are some important facts you should know.

OPIOIDS CAN HARM YOUR BABY

Research shows that if you use opioids while pregnant or breastfeeding:

- **Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome:** withdrawal symptoms in newborns
- **Neural Tube Defects:** serious problems in the development of the fetus' brain or spine
- **Congenital Heart Defects:** problems affecting how the fetus' heart develops or how it works
- **Gastroschisis:** birth defect of developing baby's abdomen
- Stillbirth
- Preterm delivery¹

HOW OPIOIDS AFFECTS YOUR BABY

No matter how you consume opioids (snorting, injecting, or swallowing), the harmful ingredients in it will reach your baby in 2 ways:

- Through your bloodstream and into the placenta.²
- Through your breast milk.³

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Should I stop taking my opioid pain medication? What are the risks?

- First, talk to your provider.
- Some women need to take opioid pain medication during pregnancy and quickly stopping your medication can have serious consequences.
- If you are misusing opioids and live in Sacramento County and want to stop, there is help available: (916) 874-9754.



REFERENCES

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
2. Mayo Clinic
3. Darnall, Beth D and Michael E Schatman. "Opioid use and lactation: protecting the child in the context of maternal pain care" Pain medicine (Malden, Mass.)vol. 16,4 (2015): 628.