

# Cannabis & Pregnancy

## (Resources for Healthcare Providers)



According to [The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists \(ACOG\)](#), using cannabis while pregnant or breastfeeding may harm the baby, therefore it is recommended to not use cannabis in order to keep the baby safe.



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**In response to ACOG's recommendation and data that pregnant/breastfeeding women are using cannabis at higher rates, a community coalition surveyed healthcare providers, social service agencies, and young women engaged with the WIC program to assess attitudes, beliefs, and needs. This document was created in response to the expressed needs of healthcare providers.**

## What can you say to pregnant or breastfeeding patients about cannabis use?

In a survey, 39 young women (18-25), engaged with a Maine WIC Program, were asked to rate how helpful ten statements would be if they needed to make a decision about using marijuana during pregnancy or while breastfeeding.

### About 4 out of every 5 women who were surveyed felt these statements were helpful:

*"Although marijuana is natural, that does not make it safe, especially during pregnancy or while breastfeeding. Not all natural substances or plants are safe. Tobacco and poisonous berries are other examples."*

*"Using marijuana while breastfeeding is not healthy for your baby. If you choose to breastfeed, please do not use marijuana."*

*"Using marijuana while pregnant may harm your baby. Marijuana that passes to your baby during pregnancy may make it harder for your child to pay attention and learn, especially as they grow older. This would make it harder for your child to do well in school."*

*"If you use marijuana during pregnancy or while breastfeeding, it may affect how your baby's brain grows and develops because it is passed through your body to your baby."*

*"A baby that experiences marijuana exposure before they are born may have problems with brain development, lower birth weight, may be born prematurely, and could develop other behavioral problems."*

### Additional Findings:

In the survey, participants said that they trust healthcare providers to share this information with them and suggested using an emotional appeal when talking with patients about use. This brings up the importance of dialogue and finding opportunities to use a motivational interviewing approach (resource: [www.aafp.org/fpm](http://www.aafp.org/fpm)) to connect with women and help them find alternative solutions to cannabis use during pregnancy or while breastfeeding. In our surveys, some providers listed alternatives they suggest including:

- Ginger
- Sea-Bands
- Medications that are safe to use during pregnancy
- Vitamin B6
- Dietary Changes

Project adapted through the generosity of Healthy Androscoggin.

**Questions? Contact Access Health at [jgodo@midcoasthealth.com](mailto:jgodo@midcoasthealth.com) or 207-373-6970**

## Cannabis Terms to Know

**There are many ways people consume cannabis. Most people are aware of smoking and edibles (orally consumed cannabis), but here are some other forms to note:**

**Vaping** - Vaping devices, such as vapes, mods, tanks, and e-cigs can be filled with many different nicotine or cannabis-based products. The cannabis oil or liquid is heated in the device and an aerosol (a suspension of small particles in gas) is released. THC content may vary greatly and cannabis vapes with vitamin E acetate have been strongly linked to the outbreak of serious lung injury called EVALI (e-cigarette, or vaping, product use associated lung injury).



**Concentrates** - Concentrates (also called wax, honey, budder, hash oil, BHO, shatter, or dabs) are highly potent cannabis oils (40-80% THC) that are made by extracting THC from the cannabis plant using solvents like butane, alcohol, or ethanol. They can be consumed by vaping, smoking, or as edibles.



**Dabbing** - Dabbing involves heating and inhaling the aerosol from concentrates.

**Tinctures** - Tinctures are liquid-based cannabis extracts with varied dosages of THC. Tinctures are dropped under the tongue or added to food or beverages.



**Topicals** - Topicals are lotions, ointments, oils, patches, or sprays infused with THC, CBD, or both.



**The various dosages, strains, and forms effect every consumer differently.**

Check out the [Maine CDC Marijuana Education Toolkit](#) for further explanation of these terms and other resources.

## Additional Resources for Training and Research Updates

- [Marijuana Use in Pregnancy: A Summary of the State of the Science \(Video - 10 min\)](#)
- [Marijuana LIT - Fact Based Information to Assist You in Providing SUD Services](#)
- [NIDA Marijuana Research Report: Can marijuana use during an after pregnancy harm the baby?](#)
- [SAMHSA Guide: Preventing the Use of Marijuana: Focus on Women and Pregnancy](#)
- [SnuggleME Guidelines for Caring for Women with Addiction and Their Babies](#)
- [SAMHSA- Marijuana and Pregnancy \(Includes a short video for expecting mothers\)](#)
- [US CDC - What You Need to Know About Marijuana Use and Pregnancy](#)

## Resources to Share With Patients

- [GoodToKnowMaine.com](#)
- [Is it Safe to Use Cannabis While You Are Pregnant or Breastfeeding? \(One Page Handout\)](#)