

Tobacco and Cannabis Use and Maternal Health Harms

Smoking cigarettes, vaping, or using cannabis can have many health harms, especially for people who are pregnant or thinking about becoming pregnant. Exposure to tobacco and cannabis products can also be harmful to fetuses and babies.

Health Harms



Cigarette Smoking

Women who smoke before pregnancy have more issues conceiving compared to women who do not smoke before pregnancy.¹

Women who smoke during pregnancy are more likely to have a baby born early, have a birth defect, or have sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).¹ Of the women who smoke during pregnancy, 20% of babies born have low birth weight.³

Women who smoke after pregnancy (exposing the baby to secondhand smoke) can have babies with weaker lungs compared to babies who are not exposed to secondhand smoke.³



Vaping

Vapes and other products containing nicotine are not safe to use during pregnancy.⁴



Vapes and other products containing nicotine are not safe to use during pregnancy.⁴



Cannabis Use

Women who use cannabis during pregnancy can harm their baby's development.⁵

Cannabis use while pregnant is highest among ages 18-25.⁹



THC and other chemicals in cannabis can be passed to a baby through breast milk, increasing the baby's risk for problems with brain development.⁵

Tobacco and Cannabis Use Rates Before, During and After Pregnancy



Before Pregnancy

7.9%

of women in California who had a recent live birth smoked cigarettes before pregnancy.²

4.3%

of pregnant women nationally used vapes during the 3 months before pregnancy.⁶

Cannabis use before pregnancy has been increasing in recent years, one study citing an increase from **6.8%** to **12.5%** from 2009-2017.⁸



During Pregnancy

2.1%

of women in California who had a recent live birth smoked cigarettes during the third trimester.²

73.9%

of women in California who had a recent live birth and smoked cigarettes before pregnancy quit by the 3rd trimester.²

1.3%

of pregnant women nationally used vapes during the last 3 months of pregnancy.⁶

About **8%**

of pregnant women report using cannabis while pregnant.⁹



After Pregnancy

3.9%

of women in California who had a recent live birth smoked cigarettes after pregnancy.²

33%

of women who had smoked cigarettes before pregnancy and quit by third trimester started smoking again postpartum.²

About **23%**

of postpartum women vape.⁷

About **5%**

of women report postpartum cannabis use.¹⁰

Among women using cannabis postpartum, about **47%** report breastfeeding.¹⁰

Quitting Resources



Californians who want to quit have access to free, customized one-on-one coaching and quit support through *Kick It California*. Call 800-300-8086 or visit the webpage to learn more about the programs they offer: <https://kickitca.org/>.¹¹

If you are pregnant and haven't been able to quit smoking on your own or with counseling, you can discuss the risks and benefits of Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved medications with your health care provider.¹²

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