Tobacco Use and Pregnancy

CIGNA Quit Today®
Tobacco Cessation Program

Did you know?

- Using tobacco during pregnancy can cause your baby to have physical, mental, and emotional problems.¹
- Tobacco use is the cause for 20-30% of low birth weight babies.²
- Using tobacco regularly can decrease your fertility.¹

If you are currently pregnant, or are thinking of becoming pregnant in the near future, you want to do everything you can to have a healthy baby. One of the most important things you can do is stop using tobacco. When it comes to your baby's health, there is no better time than now to quit.

Quitting for Your Baby's Health

Quitting tobacco at any point is beneficial – even late into your pregnancy. However, the earlier you quit, the greater the benefits will be for both you and your baby. For example, after just one day of not using tobacco, your baby will get more oxygen. Also, by making the choice to stop using tobacco, you’ll provide your baby with a healthier environment and a better chance for normal development.

Tobacco use can increase your baby’s risk of:

- Low birth weight
- Premature birth
- Still birth
- Miscarriage
- SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome)
- Cleft lips/palates
- Behavior and learning issues
- Health problems (such as asthma, ear infections, cancer, chronic colds and bronchitis)

While quitting can be difficult, you have many resources available to help you, including your doctor and the CIGNA Quit Today tobacco cessation program. The following tips can also help you through the process of quitting.
Pregnant women who continue to use tobacco when they know the consequences often have many reasons for continuing their habit. For example, they might think, “My mother smoked when she was pregnant with me and I’m fine.” While that may be true, your tobacco use could still affect your baby’s health.

While you may have your own reasons for choosing to continue using tobacco, it’s important to remember that you are putting your baby at risk. Not every baby will experience problems as a result of a mother who uses tobacco during pregnancy, but many may have problems that were potentially preventable. Since there is no way to tell if your baby will have a health problem, you have to ask yourself whether it is worth the risk to continue using tobacco during your pregnancy.

Continue to remind yourself about why you need to quit!

Whether you’re thinking about having a baby or you’re already pregnant, it’s important for you to learn about the risks of continuing to use tobacco. Remember, you’re not only quitting for yourself, but also for your baby. Thinking about your baby’s health may provide the motivation you need to stop using tobacco.

Ask for support.

There are many people who can help you to quit using tobacco. Enlist the help of trusted friends or family members who want the best for you and your baby. Ask your doctor to help you find additional information and resources that can help you quit.

Questions About Quitting

Should I use Nicotine Replacement Therapy?

If you’re considering using a form of Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT), such as the nicotine patch or gum, talk to your doctor about any potential risks of using NRT while you are pregnant. In many cases, the risk of continuing to use tobacco outweighs the risks of using NRT, but only your doctor can advise you about what is best for you.

Will I gain weight?

Sometimes people who would like to quit using tobacco are hesitant to stop because they’re afraid they will gain weight. Women who are pregnant and already gaining weight may have an even greater concern about gaining additional weight. If the possibility of weight gain is keeping you from quitting, remember that it is healthy for you to be gaining weight at this time. Your body is going through changes to help your baby grow and develop. By eating healthy and maintaining an active lifestyle, you can help prevent any extra weight gain.

If you’ve made the decision to stop using tobacco, congratulate yourself! You can feel confident that you’re doing all you can to give your baby the best start for a healthy life.

If you need extra support or help in overcoming your tobacco habit, contact your wellness coach.

Quit tobacco today. Live better tomorrow.

