

# Quitting Smoking While Pregnant

*Nicotine is a strong drug. It restricts blood vessels that feed the baby. This means less food and oxygen get through, so your baby may not grow as it should. Besides nicotine, cigarette smoke has 7,000 other chemicals, like carbon monoxide (car exhaust) and formaldehyde (embalming fluid). Chemicals like these can also keep the baby from growing normally.<sup>1</sup>*

## Risks to the Baby

Smoking while pregnant can cause:<sup>1</sup>

- **Low birth weight.** Babies born weighing less than 5 lbs. 8 oz can have serious health problems during and after birth. In other words, smaller is not better!
- **Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).** Infants are three times more likely to die of SIDS when their mothers smoke during pregnancy.
- **Learning and behavior problems.** When children are older they are more likely to have learning, attention, and behavior problems.
- **Lung problems.** Lung infections and asthma occur more often.



## Benefits of Quitting

Quitting smoking while pregnant can:<sup>2</sup>

- Increase the chance of normal birth weight
- Decrease the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)
- Lower the risk of lung infections
- Increase the chance of full-term pregnancy
- Reduce the risk of birth defects, like a cleft lip or palate
- Decrease the risk of asthma
- Reduce the chance of miscarriage

## What You Can Do

- Make your home and car smoke-free today.
- Quit smoking. Every cigarette you DON'T smoke helps your baby grow healthy.
- Find support from family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, etc.
- Contact MotherToBaby California at (866) 626-6847 or visit [www.MotherToBabyCA.org](http://www.MotherToBabyCA.org) for more information and live chat.

## Remember

It is never too late to make a fresh start!

<sup>1</sup> March of Dimes. (2014). *Smoking during pregnancy*. Retrieved December 29, 2014 from, <http://www.marchofdimes.org/pregnancy/smoking-during-pregnancy.aspx#>

<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2014, December). *Tobacco use and pregnancy*. Retrieved December 29, 2014 from, <http://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/tobaccousepregnancy/>

## Quitting Smoking While Pregnant

### Coping strategies

- C**ravings last 3-5 minutes on average. Find healthy ways to keep busy.
- O**utside. Get out of the house for some fresh air. Take walks or go to a place where you can't smoke, like the mall or the movies.
- P**repare for quitting. Cut up healthy snacks to take with you. Have straws, gum, a water bottle and other items on hand.
- I**nfant/baby focused. Think of how quitting helps your baby's health. Make a baby book or hang your ultrasound picture.
- N**urture yourself. Take a warm (not hot) bubble bath or get a massage. Treat yourself with the money you would have spent on cigarettes.
- G**et involved in new hobbies or classes. Learn to crochet or go to a prenatal class.

### Avoid excess weight gain

- W**ater is important. Try to drink 8-10 glasses per day. It fills you up and can help you fight the urge to smoke.
- E**xercise prevents excess weight gain and makes you more flexible and better prepared to give birth.
- I**ncrease your metabolism naturally. Stay active and eat well-balanced meals to give your metabolism a boost.
- G**et to know your body and what you need. Know the difference between hunger pangs and nicotine cravings.
- H**ealthy snacks. Celery and carrot sticks are great substitutes when you crave a cigarette.
- T**rust your body. Accept that gaining some weight is part of a healthy pregnancy.

### Increase your support system

- F**ind a stop smoking buddy to talk with. Your buddy can encourage you and help keep you on track.
- R**emind people you are quitting. Ask them to support you and not offer cigarettes.
- I**nsist on taking care of your emotional needs. Have a list of friends and family that you can contact when you need to.
- E**nvironment. Make your house smoke-free. Ask family and friends to smoke outside.
- N**on-smokers. Find non-smoking friends and do what they do instead of smoking.
- D**o ask for help. Don't think others know what you need. If you need help with the kids or a ride to the store, ask somebody.
- S**upport groups. Join a pregnancy or new moms' group or Nicotine Anonymous.