

Marijuana in Pregnancy, Lactation, and in Children



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MARIJUANA IS:

- Most commonly used illicit/illegal drug in the United States.
- Increasing among pregnant and breast feeding women.
- Increasing in children and adolescents.
 - 9.2 M youth reported using in 2017 (CDC).
- Perception that marijuana is “safe.”

WE HAVE A CHALLENGE –

Utah is approving marijuana for medical use.

Two Vulnerable populations.

PREGNANCY: U.S. SURGEON GENERAL ADVISORY AUGUST 29, 2019

- Marijuana use in pregnancy has doubled (3.4% - 7%) between 2002 and 2017.
 - Dispensaries often recommend marijuana for morning sickness (JAMA 2019).
- THC affects the endocannabinoid system after fetal brain development.

DISPENSARY RISK PROJECT

- Mystery shopper study (400 randomly selected dispensaries)
- Caller was 8 weeks pregnant with nausea
- Nearly 70% had product recommendations
 - Predominantly recommended edibles
 - 65% based recommendation on personal opinion
 - Only 32% recommended discussion with healthcare provider without prompting

Dickson et al Obstet Gynecol 2018

MATERNAL MARIJUANA USE LEADS TO 50% INCREASE OF LOW BIRTH WEIGHT (2500 G/ 5 LB.8 OZ.)

- Low birth weight is associated with:
 - NBICU admission
 - Neonatal morbidity and death (Metz)
 - Necrotizing enterocolitis
 - Infant Respiratory Distress syndrome
 - Intraventricular bleeding
 - Cerebral Palsy
 - Blindness
 - Developmental Delay
 - Deafness

BREASTFEEDING

- American Academy of Pediatrics: Breastfeeding is contraindicated in women using illicit drugs including marijuana
- THC is present in breast milk for a week post last use. Newborns are at risk for:
 - Newborn brain development
 - Hyperactivity
 - Poor cognitive function

AAP. Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk. 2012; www.pediatrics.org/cgi/doi/10.1542/peds.2011-3552. Accessed April 30, 2015.

ADOLESCENT RISKS

- Teens face 1 in 6 marijuana addiction risk vs. adult onset (1 in 10) and increased risk of using other drugs (CDC).
- Adolescent brain development: vulnerable patients for neuro development
 - Attention deficits
 - Executive Function-decision making
 - Impaired learning and decreased IQ
 - De motivational syndromes with increased high school drop outs, impaired social interactions

ADOLESCENT RISKS

- Mental Health Risks
 - Increased accidental overdose
 - Increased depression
 - Increased suicide
 - Increased psychotic disorders and schizophrenia
- Hyperemesis Syndrome

SUMMARY

“No amount of marijuana use during pregnancy or adolescence is known to be safe. Until and unless more is known about the long-term impact, the safest choice for pregnant women and adolescents is not to use marijuana.”

(U.S. Surgeon General Advisory 2019)

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Public Health Education programs like the Parents Empowered program.
- Medical Professional Education and Qualified Medical Provider (QMP) certification
- Monitoring: Anonymous umbilical cord study results in 2020
- Dispensary Precautions

SPECIAL THANKS

- University of Utah Marijuana Task Force
- Jerome Adams, MD, US Surgeon General