

# Substance Use and Pregnancy

Support & Resources for Expectant Moms • Routine Screening Info

## Our goal is to keep you and your baby safe, healthy, and together.

Your Women's Health Connecticut maternity team is a confidential source of support and guidance during your pregnancy and beyond. We understand that every woman's journey to motherhood is different, and we promise to listen and treat you with compassion. No matter your experience with drugs and alcohol, you can expect to receive the best possible medical care.



During your pregnancy visits, your provider may ask you about prescription medications as well as drug and alcohol use. While this can be a scary and stressful topic to talk about, it's important to be upfront and honest with your provider so that they can develop an appropriate care plan and work with you to have the healthiest pregnancy possible.

Sadly, substance use during pregnancy can cause babies to be born too early or too small, to develop physical and mental birth defects, and in severe cases, to be born in withdrawal (where the newborn's body craves the substance). Children born to mothers who struggle with substance use during pregnancy may also face additional health challenges as they grow up, including learning disabilities and behavioral health problems like depression and anxiety.

**Your maternity team is here to listen. Not only will they work with you to avoid or reduce risks to your growing baby, they will provide personalized resources to help address the issues that lead to substance use so you can be a happier, healthier mom.**

## Screening

As a routine part of your prenatal care, your provider will perform verbal screening and urine tests to check for substances (including marijuana) that may negatively impact the health of your pregnancy. We want you to know that your Women's Health Connecticut provider will never disclose the results of these screenings to anyone without your express, written consent per HIPAA laws.

However, CT hospitals are required to submit an anonymous notification to the Department of Children and Families if a newborn is believed to have been exposed to substances or displays withdrawal symptoms. **We will work with you throughout your pregnancy to develop a plan of safe care and to help prevent any situation that would lead you to be separated from your baby.**



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## Personalized care options

If you test positive for a harmful substance during your pregnancy, different treatment options are available depending on the substance and your own unique experience. Your provider may recommend medication-assisted treatment (MAT), prescribing a safe medication to help you reduce or quit substance use gradually. Your provider will also offer convenient and confidential behavioral health resources to help you address the issues that lead to substance use. Do not stop using drugs without speaking to your doctor.

If needed, your provider may recommend a local women's and children's residential program or outpatient service. The ultimate goal is to help you heal so it will be easier to avoid the substance in the future.

## After your baby is born

Avoiding drugs and alcohol after pregnancy is recommended, both for your own postpartum recovery and because the substances can still affect the baby through your breastmilk. However, if you started a MAT program while pregnant, it's ok to continue with your treatment if you choose to breastfeed. Check in with your provider about medications that are safe to use when breastfeeding.

At Women's Health Connecticut, our providers and staff care about you and your baby and we hope that you will feel safe confiding in us. Thank you for choosing us for your important prenatal care and treatment.



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Connecticut