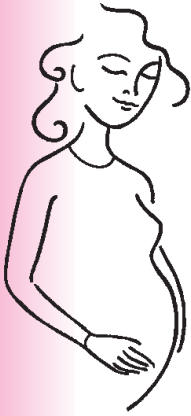


# Give AND Take



A booklet for  
**PREGNANT WOMEN**  
about alcohol and other drugs





# Give and Take

A booklet for pregnant women  
about alcohol & other drugs

Written and Produced by:  
Action on Women's Addictions -  
Research & Education  
AWARE Press©, second printing April 2009  
PO Box 86  
Kingston, ON  
K7L 4V6  
phone (613) 545-0117, fax (613) 545-1508  
Email to [aware@kos.net](mailto:aware@kos.net)  
<http://www.aware.on.ca>

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Version française également disponible.

Information in this booklet has been carefully researched by health care professionals. However, each woman's situation is unique. We therefore suggest that if you are in doubt about any of the information, you should consult with a health care professional you trust.

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PO Box 86, Kingston ON K7L 4V6

(613) 545-0117 or FAX (613) 545-1508

Email to [aware@kos.net](mailto:aware@kos.net)

[www.aware.on.ca](http://www.aware.on.ca)

***Please feel free to photocopy,  
with acknowledgement to AWARE, any useful  
information in this booklet.  
We have tried to make it as photocopy  
friendly as possible!***



## How this booklet was written

This booklet was written by women to support pregnant women who struggle with substance use issues. We hope women can use it to **prevent** alcohol and other drug problems when they are pregnant. It is **not** intended to replace treatment options, although women with alcohol and drug problems might find it helpful. We have tried to make it easy to read.

Many women helped write this booklet. Some of us have had drug and alcohol problems. Some are counsellors who have worked in prevention and treatment agencies. Others are social workers, community health nurses, and pharmacists.

### Written by:

Wendy Reynolds

### With help from:

Jennifer Amos

Jillian Estabrook

The original version of **Give & Take** was developed with research assistance from Sara Raftis and Bronwyn Barnes. The 2009 French translation was completed by Annie Bourret.

## The Local Advisory Committee--original edition

**Angie Bryant**, Gabriel Home; **Leslie Craig**, Parents Attending Secondary School; **Pat Frost**, Ongwanada; **Norma Hall**, KFL&A Health Unit; **Wendy Kelen**, North Kingston Community Health Centre; **Bonnie Sparrow**, Better Beginnings; **Beth Stinson**.



## Provincial Advisors--original edition

**Mary Byberg**, Best Start, Barrie; **Virginia Carver**, Addiction Research Foundation, Ottawa; **Paula Colwell**, Brighter Futures, Ottawa; **Henriette Déry**, Health Canada, Nepean Zone; **Kathryn Fortier**, Canadian Mothercraft, Ottawa; **Sandi Harmer**, Amethyst Women's Addiction Centre, Ottawa; **Carole Julien**, Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse, Ottawa; **Kathy Kilburn**, Addiction Research Foundation, North Bay; **Nancy MacNider**, St. Mary's Home, Ottawa; **Deanna Midmer**, Department of Family and Community Medicine, University of Toronto; and **Ann Mitchell**, Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, Ottawa. *And the many women across Ontario who helped them help us!*

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## Provincial Advisors--current edition

**Margaret Leslie**, Mothercraft/Breaking the Cycle; **Wendy Burgoyne**, Best Start: Ontario's Maternal, Newborn and Early Child Development Resource Centre; **Susan Santiago** and **Eunji Kim**, Motherisk.





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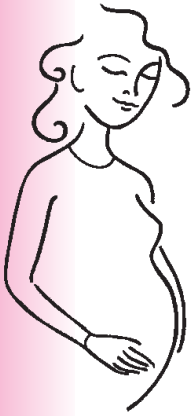
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# Give & Take

Alcohol, Other Drugs, and  
Pregnant Women's Lives

Section

1

## Who is this booklet for?

This booklet is for women who are pregnant or trying to get pregnant and who struggle with substance use issues. It has information about effects of alcohol and other drugs on pregnancy and breast-feeding. Some women find it's easy to quit or cut down when pregnant. Other women find it's difficult. You are not alone. Many women are in this situation.

We talk about the effects of different drugs on you and your baby. We look at the way other people affect you and your health. We give you ideas to try instead of using alcohol or other drugs. And we show you where to get support if you need it.

## What is the purpose of this booklet?

This booklet was written to:

- **give pregnant women facts.** Many women want to know the facts before they decide to make changes in their lives. But it's hard to find facts everyone agrees with about using alcohol and other drugs during pregnancy. There are many different opinions. So the facts we give you are those that everyone agrees with. But we also try to show how pregnancy is affected by the amount of stress in your life.



- **reassure pregnant women.** Many pregnant women are made to feel scared or guilty if they drink or take drugs. Very small amounts during pregnancy probably won't harm you or your baby. But nobody knows for sure. So if you do use alcohol or other drugs, get helpful information. We hope this booklet offers ideas to help you avoid problems.
- **give pregnant women realistic information.** An ideal pregnancy includes healthy food, affordable housing, a supportive partner, and a stress free life without alcohol or other drugs. But your reality can be very different. This booklet contains information that is realistic. And we hope it offers choices that are practical.
- **support pregnant women who have stressful lives.** Many things, not just alcohol and other drugs, affect the health of you and your baby. You might not have enough money to meet all your needs (such as food, housing, transportation, and child care). Maybe your partner mistreats you. This booklet gives ideas for dealing with all kinds of problems, including alcohol and other drugs.
- **reassure women that pregnancy is a shared responsibility.** In the past, pregnant women were made to feel totally responsible for the health of their babies. But more and more, people realize that everyone involved plays a role. This can include your partner, family, friends, and community. So we have included information in this booklet for everyone.



- **help pregnant women find support.** There are many reasons why women might need support, especially during pregnancy. This booklet will give you ideas about where to get help, if you need it.

## Why Give & Take?

The name **Give & Take** came from a pregnant woman. She said the easiest thing to remember is “if you wouldn’t **give** it to your baby, don’t **take** it when you’re pregnant!” But **Give & Take** can mean a lot of other things, too. A healthy baby isn’t just your responsibility. Your partner, family, friends, and community are also responsible. It’s a give & take relationship for everyone.

Some people say the effects of alcohol and other drugs on your baby are completely preventable. But this is not true. About half of all pregnancies are unplanned. This means many women might not know they’re pregnant for several weeks or months. So they continue to drink or use drugs the way they normally do. If this happened to you, don’t panic. Find out what steps you can take now to make sure both you and your baby are healthy. That’s where this booklet might help.



# Give & Take:

## women, stress, and pregnancy

Some people think pregnancy is a beautiful and peaceful time in a woman's life. For some women, pregnancy can be like this. But it might not be this way for other women. They enjoy being mothers. But they also know how difficult it is to raise kids. And for some women, motherhood and pregnancy can be even more difficult. Here are some examples:

- you don't have enough money
- you have other children or another job
- you are lonely, isolated, and have no support
- you are in an abusive relationship

Other people might not understand your situation. This can be hard on you. And other things can make pregnancy even more difficult. Here are some examples:

1. **Many women don't plan to get pregnant.** About half of all pregnancies aren't planned. Many women don't know they're pregnant until the second trimester (fourth month or 13 weeks).
2. **Men who abuse women often start when the woman is pregnant.** Many women find their partners were not abusive before they became pregnant. But many abusive men start to abuse women during pregnancy.
3. **Some pregnant women have partners with alcohol or drug problems.** These women don't get enough emotional or physical support. And they have to cope with the extra stress of living with a problem drinker or drug user.

## You're not the only one responsible!

Other people affect the health of both you and your baby. Your partner, family, and friends can all help you have a healthy baby. Here's how:

- **They can respect and support your decisions** about alcohol and other drugs. But only ask others for support if it's safe. Remember: you are the expert on your home situation. For example, your family and friends might think it's OK to drink or take drugs when you're pregnant. They might tell you about other women who drank or used drugs and had healthy babies. Make your own decisions. Tell them you can't compare yourself to other women. Tell them you want to quit or cut down. Get information. Start by looking through this booklet.
- **They can put your needs first.** Other people's drug use can affect you and your baby's health. It's OK to tell people not to smoke, drink, or use other drugs around you. This is not always easy or safe to do. But remember: it's your right. See page 60 for some ideas.

## Try **these** ideas

- **Get good information about pregnancy.** Ask a doctor, community health nurse, midwife, or pharmacist. Go online or read books. Find out as much as you can. Look on page 64 for websites, books, and other resources.
- **Sign up for prenatal classes.** Many communities have free classes, especially for women in high stress situations. Look on page 60 for ways to find support.
- **If your partner, family, or friends are supportive, ask them for help.** This could be anything from helping with housework to telling people not to use alcohol and other drugs around you.



- **Look for professional support.** If you need professional support, find someone you feel comfortable with. If you don't get the help you need, ask for a referral to someone else. This is your right. Look on page 60 for places to get support.
- **Get help if your partner abuses you.** If your partner mistreats you in any way, this is abuse. You don't have to put up with it. And it's against the law. Look on page 62 for places to call about the safest ways to get help.

## Give & Take: alcohol, drugs, and pregnancy

It's easy to see many reasons why a pregnant woman might use alcohol or other drugs. Most people use drugs of one kind or another, including alcohol. People use alcohol and other drugs to relax, have fun, relieve boredom, deal with problems or stress, or because they're prescribed.

### Fact

*If you're pregnant, remember:  
nobody knows exactly how much alcohol,  
tobacco, or other drugs can harm your baby.*

Health professionals say it's best for pregnant women not to drink, smoke, or use any drugs at all. Try to cut down if you can't quit. Less is better. None is best. (Check with Motherisk, your doctor, midwife, community health nurse, or pharmacist if you take medication for a medical reason. Make sure the drugs are safe for pregnant women.)

## How do alcohol and other drugs affect your baby?

Different problems can happen at different stages of your pregnancy. It depends on whether you drink or take drugs early or late in your pregnancy. Unfortunately, no one knows for sure when the most harm can happen. It depends on when, how much, and how often you drink or take drugs.

But one thing is for sure. It doesn't matter if you drink, smoke, swallow, snort, or inject them. All drugs (including alcohol, medication, and cigarettes) sooner or later reach your bloodstream. Then they pass from you into the baby's bloodstream. So even small amounts of alcohol and other drugs can reach your baby.

## Hard to believe?

It's easy to see why. You (or your friends) might have used alcohol or other drugs during another pregnancy. And those children seem perfectly healthy. Or you feel confused by all the different information you hear. You're right - information about alcohol and other drug use during pregnancy **can** be confusing. But we know this for sure: using alcohol and other drugs during pregnancy can cause babies to have learning, behaviour, or health problems as they grow up.

### Fact

*Newborns don't always show the effects caused by alcohol and other drugs right away. It can take a few years before you see the problems.*



## Don't panic!

It's never too late to quit or cut down. Both you and your baby will benefit. Call a community health nurse, midwife, counsellor, or doctor you trust for more information or support.

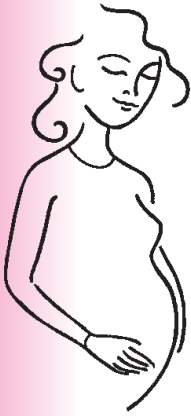
## Are you afraid to talk to others?

Many pregnant women who use alcohol or other drugs don't tell anyone. They're afraid someone will take their baby. Talk to someone you can really trust. Figure out your choices. Make a decision. Then get support to do it! Phone these private and confidential places for information.

## For more information or support ...

- ✓ **Motherisk.** Call them for free at 1-877-327-4636. They have trained counsellors who provide confidential, telephone support. They can also answer your questions on drug and alcohol use during pregnancy. Or go to their website at [www.motherisk.org](http://www.motherisk.org).
- ✓ **a health unit or community health centre.** The number is in the phone book under the name of your city, town, or county.
- ✓ **special services for pregnant women.** These include CAPC and CPNP projects. Check with your local health unit to find out if these special services are in your area. Or look on page 60.
- ✓ **Exposure to Psychotropic Medications During Pregnancy and Lactation.** This is a great resource available online from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. Go to [www.camh.net](http://www.camh.net) and search the title.





# Give & Take

Pregnant Women and the Effects  
of Alcohol and Other Drugs

Section

2

# Give & Take:

## alcohol and pregnancy

In the past, people didn't know alcohol could harm a baby. But research shows that alcohol passes from you to the baby. The more you drink, the more harmful it can be. Alcohol is in liquor, liqueurs, coolers, beer, and wine.

### Fact

***During pregnancy, any alcohol you drink has much more of an effect on your baby's system than it does on yours.***

## Should you drink at all when pregnant?

Nobody knows how much drinking can harm a baby. So it's safest not to drink at all if you're pregnant. Here's why:

- even small amounts of alcohol (such as one or two drinks) daily or a few times a week might affect you and the baby
- the harm can happen any time in the first, second, or third trimester of pregnancy
- even one heavy drinking session can cause harm at any point during your pregnancy.



But the most harm is caused by regular heavy drinking and by frequent binge drinking. If you drink regularly during pregnancy, the following things can happen:

- **problems during pregnancy.** This includes miscarriage, stillbirth, and premature delivery.
- **problems when the baby is born.** The baby could go into withdrawal when it's born. Withdrawal is like a big hangover. The effects are trembling, being very cranky, and having no appetite. The baby could even have a seizure (or a fit).
- **problems as the baby grows.** This is called Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).

These could be signs a baby has FASD:

- **They are sick a lot.** Many babies have minor illnesses. But a baby with FASD will be sick a lot more than other babies.
- **They are too small and weak.** The baby can be born small. Low birth weight babies stay smaller as they grow up.
- **They are slow or have a hard time learning.** They might have behaviour or emotional problems. This can be very frustrating for you and your child.
- **They can't understand and concentrate.** Children with FASD take a lot more time and energy to look after.

## Fact

*Babies don't grow out of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. They have it for life.*



## Feel confused?

It's no wonder! There are different opinions about drinking in pregnancy. But here's what we know for sure:

- 1. Binge drinking is more harmful than having the same total amount spread over several occasions.**
  - For example, drinking 12 ounces (341 ml) of liquor in one day is more harmful than drinking 12 ounces (341 ml) of liquor spread over a week.
- 2. Drinking causes different problems depending on the stage of your pregnancy.**
  - Alcohol causes different effects depending on the trimester. Ask a doctor, midwife, or community health nurse for information about these different effects. Or contact Motherisk at 1-877-327-4636.
- 3. The effects of drinking are different for every woman and her baby.**
  - You can't compare yourself to your friends. Some women and their babies will be affected more than others. Nobody knows why for sure. But eating habits, living conditions, and using other drugs (including tobacco) all play a part.
- 4. It's never too late to quit or cut down.**
  - Try to quit or cut down as soon as possible. You can improve the health of your baby, even if you used to drink heavily.

### Fact

*When you are pregnant, less alcohol is better. No alcohol is best.*



## What if it's hard to quit or cut down?

Some women will find it more difficult than others. This has nothing to do with willpower. It depends on your situation and how much, how often, and how long you've been drinking. Sometimes, pregnant women keep drinking because it seems easier than trying to quit or cut down. But here are some suggestions:

- **If they are supportive, ask your partner, family, and friends to help.** Tell them you're trying to quit or cut down. Ask them not to drink around you. It's your right!
- **Go online or phone a counsellor.** Look on page 60 for private and confidential places.
- **Talk to a doctor,** especially if yours is supportive. If you don't get what you need, it's your right to speak up. Or talk to a midwife or community health nurse.

### Fact

*When you're pregnant,  
it's safest not to drink at all.*



## Your partner

Your partner should support you and help you have a healthy baby. But all women don't have a partner's support. Here are some ideas for women in either situation:

- **If your partner is supportive, ask for their help.** Quit or cut down together. This makes it easier for both of you. But only ask for support if it's safe. Remember: you are the expert on your home situation.
- **If your partner won't stop drinking** and it bothers you, ask them to drink somewhere else. Situations that involve heavy drinking aren't the best place for you to be. If it's available in your community, find a safe place.
- **If your partner mistreats you in any way**, this is abuse. Men who abuse women often start when the woman gets pregnant. No one should have to live with any type of abuse. Look on page 62 for places to get help and support.

## Your family and friends

Your family and friends might think it's OK for you to drink when you're pregnant. They might even tell you about other women who drank and had healthy babies. Tell them you can't compare yourself to anyone else. Tell them you're trying to quit or cut down. Ask them to respect and support your decisions.

**Remember**  
*it's give & take!*



# Give & Take:

## smoking and pregnancy

In the past, people didn't know that a baby could be harmed by smoking. But now research shows that your baby can be harmed by tobacco smoke.

### Fact

*Tobacco smoke prevents your baby from getting enough oxygen.*

Some effects of tobacco smoke are:

- **problems when you are pregnant.** This includes miscarriage, stillbirth, premature delivery, or bleeding.
- **problems when the baby is born.** The baby is twice as likely to be born too small. Low birth weight babies often have health problems. And a smaller baby doesn't mean you'll have an easier labour!
- **problems as the baby grows.** SIDS or crib death happens more often in homes of smokers. (SIDS is when babies who seem healthy die without warning.) Also, babies who are around smokers have more flu, colds, ear infections, and breathing problems (such as asthma).



## Hard to believe?

You probably know women who smoked and had big, healthy-looking babies. But it's what you can't see that's the problem. These babies are more likely to have health problems as they grow up. They are more likely to have learning and behaviour problems, too.

## It's never too late to quit or cut down!

If you can, try to quit or cut down smoking as soon as you find out you're pregnant. But if you quit or cut down any time during your pregnancy, it will still help you and your baby.

### Fact

***Smokers are more likely than non-smokers to have problems in labour and delivery.***



## We all know quitting's not easy!

Some people don't know that the nicotine in tobacco is a drug. But nicotine **is** a very addictive drug. And tobacco smoke contains at least 4,000 other chemicals besides nicotine. And all 4,000 chemicals are harmful to the health of you and your baby.

### Fact

*The nicotine in tobacco can be more addictive than heroin or cocaine!*

## But being pregnant can make it easier!

Yes, cutting down or quitting smoking is hard. But many women smokers say it was easier to quit or cut down when they were pregnant. They say they just didn't feel like smoking as much. They didn't have as many cravings for cigarettes.



## Some things to think about

- **Switching to a lighter brand doesn't help.** You inhale more deeply to get more nicotine. And you're likely to smoke more cigarettes.
- **It's ok for pregnant women to use nicotine replacement therapies (NRTs)** like the patch, nicotine gum, or the nicotine inhaler. And some women find it easier to quit smoking while using NRTs.

## Tips to help you quit or cut down

1. **Start slowly.** Set a change date. Then aim to quit or cut down on that day. Be realistic. Smokers with realistic goals have more confidence. So their goal is easier to reach.
2. **Find someone who will help you make changes.** Make this person your change or quit "buddy". It's easier to make changes if you have as much support as possible. Also, look on page 61 for resources to help you quit or cut down smoking.
3. **Contact a professional,** such as a counsellor, community health nurse, or a doctor. They can help pregnant women quit or cut down smoking. Look on page 60 for places to get support.



## Other people's smoke

You might not smoke cigarettes. But what happens if you're around people who do? Their smoke is often called second-hand smoke. It can cause health problems for you and your baby. It doesn't matter who does the smoking.

Some women find it easy to be assertive with smokers. But it can be difficult to ask others not to smoke around you. Some smokers will respect your rights. Others won't. If it's not safe for you, don't ask. Here are some ideas to try:

- **Put up a non-smoking sign.** Ask people to go outside to smoke.
- **Meet your friends who smoke in a non-smoking area,** like a coffee shop or any other place where smoking isn't allowed.
- **Phone the health unit.** They will have ideas and information you can use.

### Fact

*A pregnant woman who is around second-hand smoke is more likely to have a low birth weight baby.*



## Your partner

What do you do if your partner smokes?

- **If your partner is supportive, ask for their help.** Try to quit or cut down together. This makes it easier for both of you.
- **If your partner won't quit smoking,** ask them (and anyone else) not to smoke around you. They can smoke outside. But only ask others if it's safe for you.
- **If your partner won't quit smoking around you,** don't argue. Leave the room when they're smoking. But for a long term answer, get advice. Look on page 60.

### Fact

*Other people's smoke affects you  
and your baby. You and your baby have  
the right to breathe smoke-free air.*



## Your family and friends

Your family and friends might think it's OK for you to smoke when you're pregnant. They might even tell you about other women who smoked and had healthy babies. Tell them you can't compare yourself to anyone else. Tell them you're trying to quit or cut down. Ask them to respect and support your decision.

If you're in a smoker's house, here are some choices:

- limit your time with them
- ask them not to smoke - be direct and firm but polite and respectful
- leave the room when others are smoking
- if necessary, don't visit them at all

**Remember**  
*it's give & take!*



# Give & Take:

## cannabis and pregnancy

Cannabis includes marijuana (pot, weed, or grass), hash, and hash oil. They all have THC in them. THC is a drug that changes the way you think, feel, and act. After alcohol and tobacco, cannabis is the drug used most often by pregnant women.

People disagree about the effects cannabis can have on you and your baby. Some reasons are:

- **Pregnant women who use cannabis often use other drugs.** This includes alcohol and tobacco. So it's hard to tell which effects are caused by the cannabis.
- **Many people don't think cannabis is harmful.** It's easier to see effects of other drugs (such as cocaine or heroin). The effects of cannabis aren't as obvious. So it's hard to believe it harms your health.



## How harmful is cannabis?

No one knows for sure about effects of cannabis on your baby. But remember these facts:

- **Cannabis smoke can be more harmful than tobacco smoke.** Cannabis smoke can have more tar and cancer causing chemicals than cigarettes.
- **Cannabis can harm your immune system.** This is the system in your body that fights off sickness and disease.
- **Most cannabis is stronger than it used to be.** This is because of the way cannabis is grown. It has more THC in it now than it used to.
- **THC stays in your body up to 3 weeks.** THC is the longest acting drug of all. This is true for all kinds of cannabis. It doesn't matter if you smoke it or eat it. It stays in your body for a long time.
- **Smoking cannabis can cause lung diseases.** This includes bronchitis, emphysema, and cancer.



## The effects of cannabis on pregnancy

For pregnant women, smoking cannabis means:

- **Your baby doesn't get enough oxygen.**
- **You might take longer to figure out you're pregnant.** Cannabis hides some early signs of pregnancy (such as nausea or morning sickness). This can make it harder to tell if you're pregnant. Then you use cannabis, alcohol, and other drugs while you're pregnant without meaning to.
- **You can have harmful effects similar to those from cigarettes.** Look on page 17 for more information about tobacco.

### Fact

*Nobody knows for sure what all the effects of cannabis are on pregnant women.*



## Other people's smoke

You might not smoke cannabis. But what if people around you do? Their smoke can affect you and your baby. It has the same effects as second-hand cigarette smoke. Look on page 23 for ideas.

## Your partner

What do you do if your partner uses cannabis?

- **If your partner is supportive, ask for their help.** Quit or cut down together. This makes it easier for both of you.
- **If your partner won't quit smoking cannabis,** ask them (and anyone else) not to smoke around you. Ask them to smoke outside. You and your baby have the right to breathe smoke-free air.
- **If your partner won't quit smoking around you,** don't argue. A short term answer is to leave the room when they smoke. But for a long term answer, get advice. Look on page 60 for places to get support.

**Remember**  
*it's give & take!*



# Give & Take:

## street drugs and pregnancy

Illegal drugs are often called street drugs. The street drugs we talk about here are:

- cocaine and crack (stimulants or uppers)
- speed, crystal meth, and other amphetamines
- heroin, and other opioids such as Percocet/Percodan, Demerol, Dilaudid and OxyContin
- hallucinogens such as magic mushrooms ('shrooms), mescaline, PCP, MDMA (ecstasy), and LSD (acid)
- inhalants and solvents (gas, glue, aerosols)

Prescription drugs might also be sold illegally. Look on page 43 for more information. Look on page 24 to find out about cannabis (marijuana, weed, or hash).

### Fact

***Street drugs can be a mix of many drugs and other harmful additives.***



## Street drugs can cause problems

Here are some problems street drugs can cause:

- **problems when you're pregnant** such as miscarriage, stillbirth, and premature delivery.
- **HIV or AIDS.** You can get HIV by sharing needles. Or you get it by having unsafe sex. You can also get hepatitis or other diseases. These diseases can be passed on to your baby.
- **problems when the baby is born.** Your baby can be born intoxicated or high. So the baby goes into withdrawal. The withdrawal depends on how much and what kind of drug you used. Examples are:
  - **cocaine, speed, and meth.** These cause babies to be very restless. They cry a lot and can't sleep.
  - **heroin and other opioids.** They cause many problems. Babies can't breathe properly. They can't sleep and are very cranky. They have a high fever, with vomiting and diarrhea.
  - **magic mushrooms ('shrooms), mescaline, PCP, MDMA (ecstasy), and LSD (acid) and other hallucinogens.** People who use hallucinogens often use other drugs. So it's hard to tell if the harmful effects are caused by the hallucinogens or by the other drugs.
  - **inhalants and solvents (gas, glue).** These are always very dangerous to use. The effects on the baby are similar to the effects caused by alcohol.

### Fact

*Babies in drug withdrawal need medical care.  
To give the right care, your doctor must know  
which drugs you took.*



- **problems as the baby grows.** This is often called “drug related harm” or “drug exposed” babies. Here are some effects that babies can have from street drugs:
  - **They are sick a lot.** Many babies have minor illnesses. But a baby who is drug exposed will be sick more often than other babies.
  - **They are too small and weak.** The baby can be born small. Low birth weight babies stay smaller as they grow up.
  - **They are slow or have a hard time learning.** This can be extremely frustrating for you and your child.
  - **They aren’t able to understand and concentrate.** These children can take a lot more time and energy to look after.

To find out more about the effects of specific street drugs, go to:

[www.motherisk.org](http://www.motherisk.org)

[www.camh.net](http://www.camh.net)

[www.addictionpregnancy.ca](http://www.addictionpregnancy.ca) (click on "Specific Substances")

## Fact

*Babies do not grow out of the effects of being exposed to drugs before birth. They have these effects for life. It depends on the kind of drug they were exposed to.*



## Some things to think about!

- 1. It's not just street drugs that cause problems.** Stress can cause problems, too. And many women use drugs to cope with stress. The combination can lead to bigger problems. You have to look at the whole picture. Other things that can be harmful are:
  - **other kinds of stress.** You have too much work to do. You look after your other kids, you work around your home, or you have a paid job. There's no time left to look after yourself during your pregnancy.
  - **an abusive partner.** They hurt, threaten, or mistreat you in any way. This includes emotional, physical, or sexual abuse. Any kind of abuse is harmful to you and your baby. You need support, not more stress, when you're pregnant.
  - **not enough money.** You might not have a paid job. Or you don't make enough money at your job. So, for example, you aren't able to eat as well as you'd like when you're pregnant.
  - **using more than one drug at a time.** More problems are caused if you use more than one drug (including alcohol, over-the-counter drugs, and cigarettes). And the biggest problems are caused if you use drugs regularly or heavily.

### Fact

*Even small changes can make big differences.  
Find the support you need to reduce stress in  
your life.*



- 2. The effects of street drugs are different for every woman and her baby.** You can't compare yourself to your friends. Some women will be more affected by drugs than other women are. Some babies will be more affected by drugs than other babies are.
- 3. It's never too late to quit or cut down.** Try to do this as early in your pregnancy as you can. It will prevent some of the drug's harmful effects.

## What if it's hard to quit or cut down?

Here are some suggestions:

- **If they are supportive, talk to your partner, family, and friends.** Tell them you're trying to quit or cut down. Ask them not to use around you. This is your right.
- **Phone a counsellor.** Ask about safe, private, and confidential services. Look on page 60.
- **Talk to a doctor**, especially if yours is supportive. If you don't get the help you need, talk to a midwife or a community health nurse. This is your right.

### Fact

*It's safest not to use street drugs at all when you're pregnant!*



## Your partner

What if your partner uses street drugs?

- **If your partner is supportive, ask for their help.** You can quit or cut down together. This makes it easier for both of you.
- **If your partner won't stop using** and it bothers you, ask them to use somewhere else. Your needs are the most important.
- **If your partner mistreats you,** this is abuse. Abusive men often start the abuse during pregnancy. Look on page 62.

## Your family and friends

Family and friends might think it's OK for you to use drugs. They might know other women who used drugs and had healthy babies. Tell them you can't compare yourself to others. Ask them to respect and support your decisions.

**Remember**  
*it's give & take!*



# Give & Take:

## caffeine and pregnancy

Caffeine is in lots of things. It's the drug in coffee and tea. But there is also caffeine in:

- energy drinks (such as Red Bull or Rockstar), cola drinks (such as Coke and Pepsi), and other soft drinks (such as Dr. Pepper)
- chocolate and chocolate drinks
- many green and herbal teas - check to make sure the tea you drink is caffeine free
- some prescription and over-the-counter drugs, such as 222s, AC&C, Tylenol with codeine, and Excedrin

## Is caffeine safe for pregnant women?

No one knows for sure how much caffeine can harm your baby. But some research shows that too much caffeine can cause:

- miscarriages
- stillbirths
- low birth weight babies

Too much caffeine can also make it more difficult to get pregnant in the first place. But using caffeine doesn't take the place of birth control!



## Fact

*Even small amounts of caffeine each day can cause problems if you're pregnant.*

## Caffeine affects you, too

Caffeine is a stimulant or an upper. This means it can cause you to feel:

- tense or on edge
- cranky or irritable
- restless or unable to sleep

These aren't necessarily harmful effects. But they can make you feel uncomfortable. And when you're pregnant, you deserve to feel as comfortable as possible!

## How to figure out amounts of caffeine

The amount of caffeine in coffee and tea depends on many things. It depends on how strong you make it, the way you make it, and the brand you use. But on average there is:

- 120 mg in a cup of brewed coffee
- 80 mg in a cup of instant coffee
- 50 mg in a cup of tea



On average, the amount of caffeine in other products is:

- 160 to 240 mg in a 16 ounce (480 ml) energy drink, depending on the kind
- 40 to 65 mg in a 12 ounce (341 ml) cola drink, depending on the kind
- 20 to 40 mg in a 2 ounce (60 g) chocolate bar, depending on the kind
- 100 mg in some over-the-counter drugs

## Fact

*To be on the safe side, pregnant women should not have more than 150 mg of caffeine a day.*

This means pregnant women should not have more than:

- 3 cups of tea a day **or**
- 1 cup of coffee a day **or**
- 2 cans of cola a day

Don't forget to count the caffeine in any medicines you take!  
And it's probably best not to drink energy drinks at all because they have so much caffeine in them.



## Tips for caffeine lovers

1. **Try a caffeine-free cola.** Some pregnant women say cola drinks help settle their stomachs. It's OK to drink regular cola once in a while. Or drink caffeine-free colas if you need them more often.
2. **Try herbal tea.** Make sure it says "caffeine free" on the label. And find out if the herbs are safe. Some herbs aren't safe for pregnant women.
3. **Drink decaf instead of regular coffee.** Decaf still has a little bit of caffeine in it. But it's a lot less than regular coffee.
4. **Try chocolate milk.** There is very little caffeine in it.
5. **Find out if there's caffeine in a medicine you need to take.** If there is, ask if there is something else you can take instead. Ask a doctor, community health nurse, midwife, or pharmacist.

## The good news is ...

Many women say they lose their taste for caffeine when they're pregnant. So it might not be as hard as you think to cut down.

### Fact

*Nobody knows how much caffeine can harm your baby. It's safest to use as little as possible.*

**Remember**  
*it's give & take!*



# Give & Take:

## over-the-counter drugs and pregnancy

Over-the-counter drugs are also called OTCs. They are drugs you can buy at the drugstore without a prescription. There are many different kinds. This is not a complete list but some common OTCs are:

- **pain killers.** Some drug (or generic) names are acetaminophen, ibuprofen, codeine, and ASAs. Some brand names are Aspirin, Tylenol, Advil, and 222s. Pregnant women might use painkillers for headache, backache, colds, or flu.
- **antihistamines.** These are found in many pills, powders, sprays, and syrups used for colds and flu. Antihistamines are also in allergy medicines and OTC sleeping pills. Some brand names are Dristan, Contac C, Sominex, Benadryl, Neo Citran, and Nytol. Pregnant women might use them to relieve symptoms of colds or allergies.
- **anti-nauseants.** The drug in anti-nauseants is also an anti-histamine. Some brand names are Gravol and Dramamine. Pregnant women might use these drugs for morning sickness. Also many people use Gravol to help them sleep.



- **antacids.** Some brand names are Maalox, Alka Seltzer, Gelusil, and Amphojel. Pregnant women might use these medicines for heartburn.
- **diarrhea and constipation medicines.** Some brand names are Kaopectate (for diarrhea) and Metamucil, Milk of Magnesia, and Ex-Lax (for constipation). They are used for upset stomach or bowels.
- **weight loss pills and supplements.** There are many different brand names. Some of the weight loss supplements claim to have mainly herbs in them. There are several herbs that are harmful to pregnant women. Other weight loss pills contain drugs that can be very harmful to pregnant women, too.

## Are OTCs harmful to pregnant women?

No one knows for sure about all the effects of OTCs on pregnant women.

### Fact

*Some OTCs are harmful to pregnant women. Some are safe. Ask Motherisk, a doctor, community health nurse, pharmacist, or midwife before you take any OTC.*



# How to use OTCs safely

Here are some ideas for using OTCs safely.

## 1. Pain killers

Always check with Motherisk, a doctor, community health nurse, midwife, or pharmacist before you take any pain killer. And remember: there is caffeine in many of them. Look on page 34 for more information about caffeine.

- **Acetaminophen.** Acetaminophen (or Tylenol without codeine) is the safest choice. It's OK to take it once in a while throughout your pregnancy.
- **Ibuprofen.** Ibuprofen (or Advil) seems to be safe up to week 32 of your pregnancy. This means, to be on the safe side, don't take ibuprofen after your sixth month (or the end of the second trimester). It can cause bleeding and discomfort in the last 6 to 8 weeks of your pregnancy.
- **ASA.** ASA (or Aspirin) doesn't seem to cause birth defects. But it can cause bleeding when you're pregnant and during labour. So do not take ASA unless you talk to a doctor or midwife first. And never take ASA after your sixth month (or the end of the second trimester).
- **Codeine.** Codeine (222s, AC&Cs, or Tylenol with codeine) may be safe once in a while. But remember: codeine makes you constipated. Also some codeine pills have ASA in them, too. And ASA can cause bleeding.

### Fact:

*If you need a painkiller during pregnancy, the safest choice is acetaminophen (or Tylenol) without codeine.*



## 2. Antihistamines and anti-nauseants

Remember: there is also caffeine in many OTC antihistamines. Look on page 34 for more information about caffeine.

Always check with Motherisk, a doctor, community health nurse, pharmacist or midwife before you take antihistamines (such as Contac C) and anti-nauseants (such as Gravol). Or try these ways to deal with symptoms:

- **if you have a cold or flu**, do what your mother always said! Rest and drink lots of fluids. OTCs don't cure cold or flu.
- **if you have morning sickness**, look on page 53 for helpful ideas.
- **if you have allergies or hay fever**, make sure your antihistamine is safe. Find out from a doctor, community health nurse, midwife, or pharmacist.

### Fact

*Antihistamines or anti-nauseants might not be as safe as you think. Check with a doctor or pharmacist.*

## 3. Antacids

Don't use the fizzy types of antacids (such as Alka Seltzer). They are full of salt which can give you high blood pressure. And salt isn't good for the baby, either! Other types of antacids (such as Amphojel, Gelusil, or Maalox) are safe for pregnant women to use once in a while. Look on page 54 for other ideas.



#### 4. **Anti-diarrhea medicines**

You can safely use Kaopectate or Kaocon for diarrhea that lasts one or two days. But if diarrhea lasts longer, see a doctor. Diarrhea is dangerous for pregnant women. You lose too much water from your body. This makes you dehydrated.

#### 5. **Constipation medicines (or laxatives)**

Some constipation medicines are safe during pregnancy. These are called “bulk-forming”. An example is Metamucil. Ask a doctor or pharmacist before you take any other kind. Look on page 54 for ideas to help with constipation.

#### 6. **Weight loss pills and supplements**

Weight loss pills and supplements are never healthy. They can make you restless and anxious. They upset your sleep and your stomach. Instead, try to eat well and stay healthy. Gaining 25 or 30 pounds is part of a healthy pregnancy. This means pregnant women need an extra 300 calories (a muffin, a glass of milk, and an apple) per day. Breast-feeding women need an extra 450 calories. So this is not the time to diet!

### Fact

***Some OTCs are not safe for pregnant women.  
If you take OTCs, ask Motherisk, a doctor,  
community health nurse, midwife, or  
pharmacist which ones are safe.***

**Remember**  
*it's give & take!*



# Give & Take:

## prescription drugs and pregnancy

There are many kinds of prescription drugs. This is not a complete list, but some of them are:

- sleeping pills and tranquilizers
- antidepressants
- antibiotics
- allergy medications
- pills and creams for acne or wrinkles that contain retinoids for skin problems (such as Retin-A and Accutane)

### Fact

*Many prescription drugs are not safe for pregnant women. Make sure your doctor knows if the drugs you take are safe.*

## Need a prescription drug?

Some women need to take prescription drugs during pregnancy. If you do, here are some things to remember:

- **First things first - tell all your doctors you're pregnant!**  
This includes your family doctor, specialists, emergency room doctors, and dentists.



- **Prescriptions that were safe before you were pregnant might not be safe for you now.** So always check with your doctor before taking any old or leftover prescriptions.
- **Get a list of possible side effects from your doctor.** Pay attention to what's happening to your body. Don't assume any symptoms you might have are a normal part of pregnancy. Phone your doctor and describe your symptoms. It's your right to talk with your doctor as often as you need to. Ask your pharmacist or call Telehealth Ontario to speak with a registered nurse at 1-866-797-0000. Or call toll free TTY at 1-866-797-0007
- **Ask your doctor if it's safe for you to take antidepressants** when you're pregnant. It's important to treat depression during pregnancy. This can prevent a major post-partum depression. And it's better for the health of both you and your baby if your depression is treated.

## Questions to ask a doctor or pharmacist

Take these questions with you. Ask for extra time to discuss your concerns. This is your right.

### 1. Is this drug necessary?

- What happens if I don't take the drug at all? (Look on page 52 for other ideas.)
- Will something else help instead of taking the drug?
- Is the prescribed amount safe for a pregnant woman? Is another drug safer?
- Can I get the same benefit from taking less?



## **2. What kind of drug is it?**

- What is it supposed to do?
- Is it dangerous in combination with other drugs, alcohol, or food?
- How soon will it work?
- Are there other names for the same drug?

## **3. How do I take the drug?**

- How often and how long do I take it?
- What happens if I miss a dose?
- Do I stop taking it when I feel better? Or do I finish the whole prescription?
- Should I make another appointment before the prescription is refilled?

## **4. What are the problems with the drug?**

- Is the drug addictive? (if it is, ask: what is the shortest time I can take it? Is there another drug I can take instead?)
- What are all the side effects of the drug?
- What do I do if I get the side effects, besides taking other drugs? Do I call the doctor if I get any side effects?
- Are there any long term effects? What are they?
- Are there any activities I should avoid while taking the drug?

Before you take any drug, get as much information as you can. Ask yourself if you know all the risks and benefits. If possible, find out other ideas to try instead of taking drugs. Talk to a counsellor from Motherisk, a pharmacist, community health nurse, or midwife.

## A final word about pregnancy and prescription drugs

There are other ways you might get prescription drugs besides getting them from your doctor. Maybe a friend or family member gives you some of their prescription. Or you have drugs leftover from an old prescription. And sometimes these drugs are sold on the street illegally. If you take prescription drugs in any of these situations, be careful. Find out if they are safe for you and your baby. If you don't want to ask your doctor, check on page 60 for other places to get information.

**Remember**  
*it's give & take!*



# Give & Take:

## alcohol, other drugs and breast-feeding

Breast-feeding is great for your baby. But remember: a little bit of most things you eat or drink passes through your breast milk to your baby. This means your breast milk is affected by alcohol and other drugs. No one knows for sure what all the effects are. So remember it's give & take. If you wouldn't give it to your baby, don't take it while you're breast-feeding!

### Fact

***Any drug you take (including alcohol and cigarettes) will be in your breast milk.***

Here is some information about the effects of alcohol and other drugs on breast-feeding.

## Alcohol

Information about drinking and breast-feeding is very confusing. Alcohol shows up in your breast milk. But people disagree about the amount that causes problems. So doctors, community health nurses, and midwives usually tell breast-feeding mothers not to drink.

If you do drink and breast-feed, remember:

- your baby might not drink enough milk
- your baby might not sleep well

It depends on how much and when you drink. So try not to drink an hour or so **before** you breast-feed. Instead, have the drink right **after** you breast-feed. Then your body has time to get rid of the alcohol before the next feeding.

If you drink regularly and breast-feed, the alcohol can affect how well your baby develops mentally and physically. The baby's brain is still developing for up to 12 months after it's born. So the alcohol can cause brain damage. Heavy drinking can also affect your "let down" (the milk flowing into your nipples so the baby can feed).

## Fact

*A drink once in a while (especially right after you breast-feed) probably won't harm your baby. But remember: less alcohol is better, none is best.*



## Smoking

Even if you smoke, breast-feeding is best for your baby. Just don't smoke at the time your baby is feeding. It can decrease the amount and quality of your breast milk by a third. The best choice is to try to quit smoking. And it's safe to use Nicotine Replacement Therapies (NRTs) such as the patch, gum, or inhaler while you're breast-feeding. Always protect your baby from second-hand smoke. Smoke from other people's cigarettes is harmful to both of you. Look on page 17 for more information.

## Over-the-counter and prescription drugs

If you breast-feed and take prescription or over-the-counter drugs (including painkillers, laxatives, antacids, and cold medicines) remember to:

- always check with your doctor first
- remind your doctor you are breast-feeding
- ask if the drug is safe or if there is a safer one
- watch for any effects on your baby (including poor feeding, rashes, upset stomach, and being cranky)

It's a good idea to take prescription or over-the-counter drugs right **after** you feed your baby. Then there will be less of the drug in your milk the next time you feed the baby.



## Street drugs

Very little is known about the effects of cannabis, speed, cocaine, heroin, inhalants and solvents, or mushrooms and other hallucinogens on breast-feeding. But they can have these effects on your baby:

- extreme restlessness (or hyperactivity)
- drowsiness (or sedation)
- poor feeding

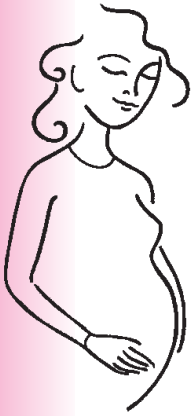
It depends on the kind of drug and how much you use. And if you are dependent on (or addicted to) a street drug, the baby can become dependent too.

### Fact

***It's a good idea not to drink or use drugs when breast-feeding. Try to quit or cut down. If you need support to do this, look on page 60 for places that can help.***

**Remember**  
*it's give & take!*





# Give & Take

Ideas for More Information  
and Support

Section

3

# Give & Take:

good ideas to try when you're pregnant

Remember these important facts!

- **Give yourself the right to put your needs first.** Ask for support and encouragement when you need it. Take time out for yourself. Make sure other people help you in every way they can. It's your right to have this support, especially when you're pregnant.
- **Find support for choices you make about alcohol and other drugs.** It's your decision to quit or cut down. Decide what's right for you. Then ask your partner, friends, and family to respect your choices.
- **Get help if you need it.** It's your right to get help with anything from practical support (for child care and housework) to professional help (such as counselling). Look on page 60 for places to get support.

## When you're not feeling well...

Many women have some of the following physical symptoms during pregnancy. Try these ideas instead of using alcohol or other drugs to cope.



## Nausea (or morning sickness)

- Eat dry toast, crackers, dry cereal, or unsalted popcorn or pretzels at least half an hour before you get out of bed in the morning if you can.
- Make sure you eat a small breakfast after you get over the nausea.
- Keep crackers or unsalted popcorn or pretzels with you to eat when your stomach feels upset. Try different dry snacks until you find one that helps.
- Eat four or five small meals a day instead of two or three big ones.
- Open a window or use a fan when you cook to get rid of strong smells. (Better yet, have someone else cook for you!)
- Avoid greasy, fried, or spicy foods or any food that makes you feel sick.
- Try to cook at the time of day you feel best.
- Eat healthy food if you can. But eat whatever you can if it appeals to you.
- Find out if there is a Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP) project near you. They will have good ideas. Find out from your local health unit.
- For morning sickness and nausea, call the Motherisk Morning Sickness Helpline at 1-800-436-8477



## Constipation

- Drink lots of water and other liquids such as fruit juice.
- Eat a salad each day, if possible.
- Drink a glass of warm water as soon as you get up in the morning.
- Eat foods high in fibre such as beans, whole wheat bread and cereal, and raw fruits and vegetables. Or add bran to your food when possible.
- The iron in prenatal vitamins can cause constipation. So you will need more fibre if you take these vitamins.
- Try prunes or prune juice - this really works! Water down the juice to make it taste better.
- Get mild exercise such as a walk every day. Or mild yoga stretches can also help with constipation.

## Heartburn

- Try crackers and toast before a meal - this can help with stomach acid.
- Eat four or five small meals a day instead of two or three big ones.
- Bake or broil food instead of frying it.
- Move around after eating - don't lie down!
- Drink liquids after and between meals instead of with your meals.



- Drink milk if your body can handle it.
- Drink small amounts of chocolate milk if you don't like plain milk.
- Eat less spicy or fatty foods.
- Cut down on caffeine (including cola drinks) - drink more water instead.
- Eat slowly and at a time you feel relaxed.
- Keep a record of what you eat so you can figure out which foods cause heartburn.
- Prop some pillows behind your back. Use your couch cushions behind your pillows for extra support. This can help with night time heartburn.

## Sleeping problems

- Take a relaxing bath.
- Try warm milk.
- Sleep on your side.
- Tuck a pillow between your knees and under your stomach.
- Get enough iron and fibre in your food.
- Use a hot water bottle - just don't use hot water!  
Warm water is very relaxing and won't harm your baby.
- Try a relaxation tape or a massage.

## Aching feet and legs

- Take a short walk every day.
- Don't stand for long periods of time.
- Put your feet up.
- Don't cross your legs or ankles.
- Wear support stockings and shoes that aren't too small. Don't wear knee-highs!
- Try gentle leg stretches or rub your legs.
- Make sure you get enough calcium.
- Soak your feet and legs. A cool soak will take down swelling.

## Backache

- Wear flat shoes or shoes with low heels.
- Sit with your knees propped higher than your hips.
- Take a warm bath.
- Put one foot on a stool if you stand a lot. Or rock toe to heel. This helps with the pressure on your back.

**Fact**  
*Pregnant women  
are beautiful!*



Try these ideas if there are days you feel big, unattractive, or uncomfortable:

- wear comfortable clothes
- think of ways to pamper yourself
- take the time to make yourself feel good - you're worth it!
- keep trying different ideas until you find what works best for you

## When you're trying to cut down on alcohol and other drugs ...

Try these ideas.

1. **Have fun** without alcohol and other drugs. Ask a friend over to play cards or watch a video. Have a (decaf!) coffee with a family member somewhere that is smoke-free. Take your partner on a date or to a movie. Do things that make **you** feel good.
2. **Drink mocktails** or drinks that don't have alcohol in them. Mix soda or tonic half and half with orange, cranberry, or apple juice. Most books on pregnancy have other ideas for mocktails.
3. **Switch to decaf** if you drink coffee. Or try herbal teas. But find out from Motherisk, a doctor, community health nurse, or midwife which ones are safe to drink during pregnancy.



4. **Eat as well as you can afford to.** Eating well can be tough if you're on a budget. Do the best you can. Find out what a pregnant woman's body needs. Remember: pregnant women need an extra 300 calories (a muffin, a glass of milk, and an apple) per day. Breast-feeding women need an extra 450 calories. Many women also need prenatal vitamins. Ask your doctor, community health nurse, or midwife for more information. They can tell you what you can get under your drug plan or drug card.
5. **Take short rest breaks** for even 15 or 20 minutes. They can really help with stress. Give yourself permission to take one or two breaks during the day. Put your feet up. Or lie down to ease the pressure on your back.
6. **Exercise** helps in many ways. You're probably tired of hearing this! But it's true. Exercise relieves stress if you're trying to quit or cut down drinking or using drugs. Exercise also helps keep your body healthy. Walk, swim, or play ball with your family. Get other ideas from a health professional.
7. **Massage** your forehead, neck and shoulders, and back. Find out about ways to massage yourself. Or ask your partner, a friend, or a family member to massage you. Just make sure you ask someone who makes you feel comfortable and relaxed.



8. **Try to find child care** if you have other kids. Looking after kids when you're pregnant can be exhausting. Find out about family day care, after school groups, and play groups in your area. You may qualify for low cost child care services. Or make a plan with friends and neighbours to look after each other's kids. Even if it's just a couple of hours, this will give you a break. Look on page 61 for some ideas about who to call.
9. **Ask for support** from your partner, family, and friends. Ask them not to drink, smoke, or use drugs around you. You have the right to ask others to support and respect your choices.
10. **Pick up the phone** and call a community health centre or health unit. Or find out about CAPC and CPNP projects in your area. Ask for more information about staying healthy during pregnancy. They will give you tips on exercise, nutrition, and relaxation. They can also refer you to prenatal classes.
11. **Talk to others** about stress or worries. Many women say pregnancy is stressful. Just talking to someone else helps. And it helps the other person too! Meet other pregnant women at a drop-in centre or prenatal classes. Or talk to a close friend. And if they can't help, maybe a professional can. Look on page 60.



## Where to get support

The inside front cover of the phone book has emergency numbers. Check the white pages. Or look in the yellow pages under “S” for social services, “W” for women’s services, or “A” for addiction (or alcohol and drug) services. Or ask 411 for the right number. Or go a Google search. You can phone these numbers to get information only. You don’t have to leave your name or make an appointment. It’s your choice.

### 1. *Information about alcohol and other drug problems*

#### **Alcohol & Drug Counselling Services**

This is a good place to start. The counsellors know about all the services that are available. They will help you decide which is best for you. Go to [www.dart.on.ca](http://www.dart.on.ca) to find out about treatment services in your area. Or look in the Yellow Pages online or in the phone book. Look under either "addiction" or "alcohol".

#### **Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous**

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) are both self help groups. AA is for people with alcohol problems. NA is for people with drug problems. Go to [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org) to find a meeting time in your area.

#### **Motherisk**

They have information about alcohol, drugs, and pregnancy. They can give you advice and information. Phone 1-877-327-4636. Or visit their website at [www.motherisk.org](http://www.motherisk.org).

#### **Drug and Alcohol Registry of Treatment**

DART has information about openings in alcohol and drug treatment centres across Ontario. Phone for free at 1-800-565-8603. Or visit their website at [www.dart.on.ca](http://www.dart.on.ca).



### **Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)**

You can get information about alcohol, drugs, and pregnancy. They also have general alcohol and drug information. Go to their website at [www.camh.net](http://www.camh.net). Search for information about a specific drug (including alcohol and tobacco). Or search "Is It Safe for My Baby?"

### **PRIMA (Pregnancy-Related Issues in the Management of Addictions) project**

They have information about alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use during pregnancy and breast-feeding. Visit their website at [www.addictionpregnancy.ca](http://www.addictionpregnancy.ca).

### **Pregnets**

This is a website for pregnant women who smoke. Go to [www.pregnets.org](http://www.pregnets.org). Click on "For Moms and Moms to Be" for more information.

### **Smokers Help Line**

They can help pregnant women to quit smoking. You can get support online at [www.smokershelpline.ca](http://www.smokershelpline.ca). Or phone toll free at 1-877-513-5333.

## **2. *Information about pregnancy***

### **Health Units or Public Health Units**

They help pregnant women be healthy in many different ways. Phone for more information. Look in the Yellow Pages online or in the phone book. Or Google "Health Unit" to find the one closest to you.

### **Maternity Homes**

These provide young, single, pregnant women with support and housing before and after the birth of their baby. There may be a maternity home in your area. You can do an online search. Or phone your local health unit.

### **Community Action Program for Children (CAPC) and Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP)**

These are special services for pregnant women, or women who have young children. There are also a few communities in Ontario that have Better Beginnings programs. Look in the Yellow Pages online or in the phone book under "Social and Health Services". Or contact your local health unit.

### **Ontario Early Years Centres**

Find out if there is an Early Years Centre in your area. You can call their INFOline toll-free at 1-866-821-7770, TTY 1-800-387-5559. Or go online at [www.gov.on.ca/children/oeyc/en/index.html](http://www.gov.on.ca/children/oeyc/en/index.html)

## **3. *Information about violence and abuse***

### **Interval Houses or Women's Shelters**

These are safe homes for women and kids who have been abused. Or you can phone them to get names of counsellors in your area. Many shelters have free 800 phone numbers. The phone numbers for your area are listed in the front of the phone book under Emergency Numbers. Or dial 411 to get the phone number.

### **Sexual Assault Centres or Women's Centres**

These centres help with present or past abuse. Most offer free or low cost counselling. Or they can give you names of counsellors in your area. The phone numbers for your area are listed in the front of the phone book under Emergency Numbers. Or dial 411 to get the phone number.

### **A Safe Passage**

This is a website for pregnant women about abuse and trauma. Go to [www.asafepassage.info](http://www.asafepassage.info).

### **Shelternet**

This is a website that will help you locate a shelter in your area for abused women and children. Go to [www.shelternet.ca](http://www.shelternet.ca).



### **National Clearinghouse on Family Violence**

They have written information and other resources. Phone for free at 1-800-267-1291. Or visit [www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ncfv-cnivf/familyviolence/index.html](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ncfv-cnivf/familyviolence/index.html). Click on the "Links" icon to find specific information for your situation.

### **Neighbours, Friends and Families**

They are a public education campaign dedicated to raising awareness about women abuse. Visit their website at [www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.ca](http://www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.ca).

### **Assaulted Women's Help Line**

They provide counselling over the phone for women who are physically, emotionally, or sexually abused. They can give you numbers of the shelter or sexual assault crisis centre closest to you. Phone 1-866-863-051, TTY 1-866-863-7868, or #SAFE (#7233) on your Bell, Rogers, Fido, Telus cell phone. Or go online at [www.awhl.org](http://www.awhl.org).

## ***4. Information about other issues***

### **Crisis Lines**

There are many kinds of crisis lines. Some are talk lines. Others are for emergencies such as assault. You can do a Google search for your area. Or look in the phone book.

### **Community Health or Mental Health Centres**

Community Health Centres have doctors, social workers, and nurses on staff. They help with medical problems and offer support or counselling. Community Mental Health Centres provide support and counselling. And they can refer you to a doctor if you need one.

### **211 Canada**

They have information about social and health services. Go to [www.211canada.ca](http://www.211canada.ca) to find out if this service exists in your area.

**Ontario Association of Food Banks.**

Visit their website at [www.oafb.ca](http://www.oafb.ca) to find a Food Bank in your area.

**Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association**

Visit their website at [www.onpha.on.ca](http://www.onpha.on.ca) and click on "Looking for Housing." This will describe the application process for non-profit housing.

**Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)**

They educate the public about mental health. They also have information about mental health services in your community. Visit them online at [www.cmha.ca](http://www.cmha.ca) to find a CAMH in your area.

**AIDS and Sexual Health Information Line**

Phone 1-800-668-2437.

**Canada Without Poverty**

This organization works to promote poverty awareness and to help create solutions to poverty. Phone toll free at 1-800-810-1076. Or go online: [www.cwp-csp.ca](http://www.cwp-csp.ca).

**Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs**

They have information about child care in your area. Phone 1-866-637-7226. Or visit them on-line at [www.frp.ca](http://www.frp.ca).

**Telehealth Ontario**

They offer free access to a registered nurse on the telephone, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You do not need to provide your health insurance number and all information is confidential. You can call them at 1-866-797-0000. Or call toll free TTY at 1-866-797-0007.



## Other helpful resources

Check libraries, health units, and other agencies. They might lend books about pregnancy. Or go online at [chapters.indigo.ca](http://chapters.indigo.ca) to browse for books.

### **Why Women Smoke: A Booklet About Women and Smoking**

This costs \$2.50 (postage & handling). Email [aware@kos.net](mailto:aware@kos.net) to order. Or go to their website at [aware.on.ca](http://aware.on.ca).

### **Complete Guide to Prescription and Non-Prescription**

**Drugs** This book by H. Winter Griffith is published by Berkley Trade. A new edition of this book is released every year, so the information is always up-to-date.





GIVE & TAKE

