

TOBACCO + NICOTINE

TOBACCO + NICOTINE + PREGNANCY

Tobacco is a leafy plant that contains large amounts of nicotine, a chemical that affects the brain.

Most of the health problems associated with tobacco products are thought to be the result of smoking, and not related to the nicotine.⁹⁶⁻⁹⁸ That's why smokeless nicotine delivery systems like gum, patches, and e-cigarettes are considered to be less harmful.

E-cigarettes (vapes) have only been around for a few years, so we don't have very good information about their health effects, but the information we do have suggests that they are less harmful for you than smoking.



Every person is different, but in general, this is a list of tobacco and nicotine products, from most harmful to least harmful:⁹⁶⁻¹⁰⁰

- cigarettes
- cigars
- pipes
- hookah
- chewing tobacco
- snuff
- e-cigarettes and vaping *
- patches
- gum and lozenges

* What you vape matters.

Some vape juices have very highly concentrated nicotine. Some have less - or none. Make sure to use juices that come from a reliable source to avoid dangerous contamination.



TOBACCO + NICOTINE + PREGNANCY

Most of the research regarding tobacco, nicotine and pregnancy is conducted with pregnant people who smoke cigarettes.

The effects of nicotine on pregnancy may be similar to the effects of other stimulants. Babies might experience nicotine withdrawal which might make them irritable and hard to console.^{101, 102}

Next to getting good prenatal care, quitting smoking may be the single best thing you can do to have a healthy pregnancy. Ask for help.

Smoking cigarettes has been linked to **early birth, lower birth weight, placenta problems, birth defects, and breathing problems** for the child as they grow up. Smoking is also linked with Sudden Unexpected Infant Death Syndrome/Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SUID/SIDS) or unexpected death under one year of age.^{20, 103-105}

People who are able to reduce their smoking or quit during pregnancy decreased the risk of SUID by 12 to 21 percent, so it is recommended to smoke as few cigarettes as possible.¹⁰³

Nicotine has been shown to affect the development of the baby's brain and may increase the risk of attention deficit disorders.^{20, 103-105}

Smokefree: Pregnancy and Motherhood 
www.women.smokefree.gov/pregnancy-motherhood



TOBACCO + NICOTINE + LACTATION

Smoking may **decrease milk production** and/or cause your milk to **dry up earlier**.^{20, 106}

Nicotine and other harmful substances in cigarettes can be passed to the baby through human milk.^{21, 106}

Nicotine and other harmful substances are thought to pass to the baby through human milk after vaping.

It's important to remember that even though there are risks associated with smoking and breast/chestfeeding, it is still considered **better to breast/chestfeed and smoke than to formula feed and smoke**.^{21, 106, 107}



CHILDREN + SMOKE EXPOSURE

Children who are exposed to second-hand or third-hand smoke (residue left on clothes or surfaces in the home) can have increased risks of ear infections, coughs, colds, breathing problems (asthma, bronchitis and pneumonia), and tooth decay. Ongoing exposure to the cancer-forming chemicals in cigarette smoke or vapor can also increase risks for breathing difficulties.

Children with these exposures may grow up to have increased risk of cataracts, heart and lung disease, and asthma.



Source: American Academy of Pediatrics. "How Parents can Prevent Exposure to Thirdhand Smoke." 2017.

What treatment options are available for people who are pregnant?

There are many different options to help people **reduce or quit smoking**. You can get patches, gum, lozenges, or e-cigarettes without a prescription. Insurance may cover gum, patches, or lozenges with a prescription from a healthcare provider.





Healthcare providers can also prescribe **nicotine nasal sprays, inhalers, or medications** like bupropion (Wellbutrin®) or varenicline (Chantix® and Champix®) to help their patients reduce or quit smoking. These medications have not been approved for use during pregnancy, but they may be **safer than continuing to smoke** and **should be discussed with your doctor**.





SMOKING CESSATION: HELP QUITTING

"Quitting smoking is one of the best things you can do for a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby. But that doesn't make quitting easy. Whether before, during, or after baby, we have the tools and support to help you quit and stay quit."

Smokefree Women

- [Smokefree texting program](#) 
- [Build Your Quit Plan](#) 
- [Using Medications to Help You Quit](#) 
- [Smokefree Apps](#) 

Smokefree: Pregnancy and Motherhood

- [Quitting While Pregnant](#) 
- [Smokefree Motherhood](#) 

Smokefree: This Free Life



1-800-QUIT-NOW
(1-800-784-8669)
1-877-44U-QUIT
(1-877-448-7848)

LIVE CHAT ON
WEBSITE 

HARM REDUCTION: VAPING + E-CIGARETTES

Cigarette smoking causes significant health problems for both people who are pregnant and those who are not. While using e-cigarettes is not as safe as quitting, **switching to exclusive vaping is a healthier choice than exclusive cigarette smoking.**¹⁰⁸

Scientists still need to collect more information about e-cigarette use in pregnancy. **The nicotine in both cigarettes and e-cigarettes has the potential to cause harm to a fetus, however, e-cigarettes lack the harmful products related to combustion** that are present in standard cigarettes.

The evidence is clear that exclusively using e-cigarettes is safer than smoking cigarettes in pregnant people.¹⁰⁹⁻¹¹⁴ In the UK, the national health service encourages pregnant people who smoke to switch to e-cigarettes, even providing them with equipment and supplies!¹¹⁵

It is unclear whether smoking and vaping is healthier for pregnancy than just continuing to smoke without vaping, even if you use fewer cigarettes.¹¹²

Most people who quit smoking with e-cigarettes are not able to switch completely right away, and many experience a period of weeks, months, or even years of using both.^{114, 116} Whether or not it is healthier for you probably depends on your patterns and amount of use, but scientists aren't sure yet.

When making the decision about whether to quit smoking with the help of a vape, it's important to consider what it would mean for you - not just during your pregnancy, but for the rest of your life.

Quitting smoking is one of the best things you can do for yourself, your pregnancy, and your future. If you have tried quitting before, but other quit methods didn't work for you, vaping might help. The hierarchy of risk for quit methods is:

- **Safest:** Quitting nicotine and tobacco use altogether
- **Safer:** Quitting with therapies like gum, patches, or bupropion
- **Safer:** Quitting using an e-cigarette
- **Least safe:** Continuing to smoke



RESOURCES AND TOOLS

Illinois Tobacco Quitline

"Make a change for a healthier life. Explore this free resource to become tobacco free. You can quit — we can help." Funded by the Illinois Department of Public Health.

www.quityes.org

 1-866-784-8937

Freedom From Smoking

Freedom From Smoking® is a flexible online course by the American Lung Association that includes nine sessions to be completed over six-weeks. They also provide workbooks, resources, and support groups to help you reach your goals.

www.freedomfromsmoking.org

 1-800-586-4872

Smokefree: Pregnancy and Motherhood

www.women.smokefree.gov/pregnancy-motherhood

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