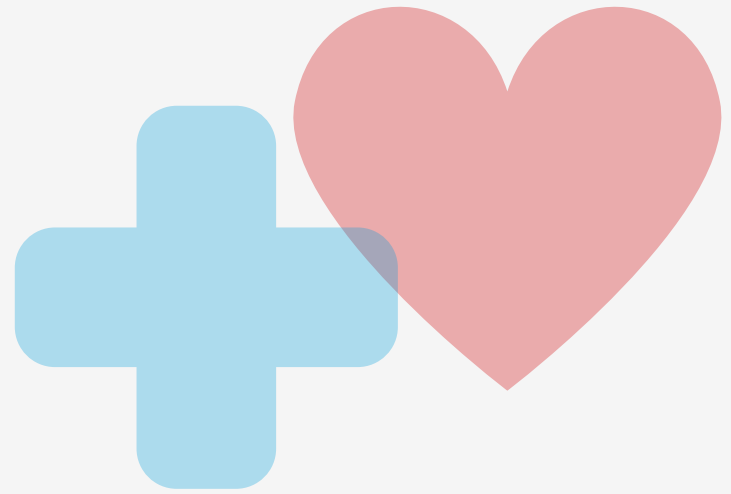


SECTION 2



HARM REDUCTION

Harm reduction is a radical change from the way society has historically responded to substance use.

Harm reduction is the idea that since we cannot completely eliminate risk and harm, we should do our best to minimize them.

Some examples of risk reduction in our daily lives are wearing seatbelts, using condoms, and getting enough sleep.

The most important and radical part of harm reduction is to demonstrate with our words and actions that **we respect and love people who use drugs.**

Most of the problems our society links with drug use are not caused by drug use. For example, crime, violence, and damaging health effects are not directly caused by substance use. They are caused by medical neglect and our racist criminalization of certain types of use.



Abstaining from all recreational substance use during pregnancy and breast/chestfeeding is the safest option for most people. But it's important to understand that some people have trouble achieving abstinence. Or don't want to stop using all substances. Those that want to stop or cut down but cannot may or may not have a substance use disorder (SUD).

Whether or not you're using, your health matters! And you deserve high-quality pregnancy care.

Substance use is just one of many things that influence our health and pregnancy outcomes. This section will give you the tools you need to be as healthy as possible, whether or not you're using substances.

www.perinatalharmreduction.org

Most people use substances at different times and in different ways during their lives. And most people try several times before they stop using a substance they've become dependent on. **A good healthcare provider will continue to work with people who are unable - or unwilling - to quit using substances,** rather than dropping them as patients.

It's ok to make missteps on your path to healthier use or recovery. Relapses are an expected part of everyone's journey. If a treatment does not work, try something else. **Remember:** The treatment failed, not you.

The following sections will give you the **tools you need to help you have a healthy pregnancy and stay safe** for as long as you use drugs - whether or not you are trying to cut back or stop.

Please remember that much of the research that has been applied to pregnant people who use drugs is problematic. Studies seldom control for all the things that might lead to negative outcomes, such as poverty, racism, trauma, poly-substance use, poor nutrition, or other conditions.

TIPS FOR A HEALTHY PREGNANCY



- **TAKE YOUR VITAMINS**

Prenatal vitamins provide you with the extra minerals and nutrients you need to protect your health and ensure your baby's healthy development.



- **GET GOOD PRENATAL CARE**

This is the most important thing you can do. Getting care early and often reduces your risks for most complications.



- **MAKE HEALTHY CHOICES**

Use fewer substances less often while increasing your healthy behaviors like getting more sleep, eating better, and drinking more water.



HARM REDUCTION

strategies for parents

Record how much you use. This can help you reduce your use, even if that was not your original goal.



Set limits on when and where you use, like waiting until after 5:00 to drink or only using at home or with a trusted friend.



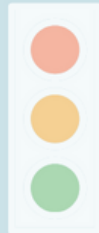
Make a list of the risks and benefits of stopping and continuing to use. Think about where you're at or who you're with when you use.



Avoid using opioids, alcohol, or other depressants (downers) when you are alone or feeling vulnerable.



Switch to a safer method - which might be different for each substance. For example, taking a pill is safer than injecting heroin, but it is easier to control your dose of cannabis with smoking rather than eating edibles.



Set personal limits on what you use, when you use, and how much you use. For example, don't combine substances, or plan to have no more than 3 drinks over 2 hours.



Make a safety plan before you use. For example, arrange transportation so you don't need to drive.



Make a parenting plan before any substance use - including alcohol use. Arrange for help with childcare. Know what you'd do in an emergency.



Attend support groups like Moderation Management, SMART Recovery, NA, or AA. Look for peer support.

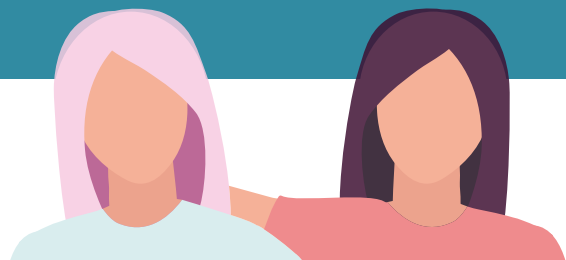


Take good care of your body and mind. Eat healthy foods. Get enough sleep. Exercise. Drink water.



TIPS FOR SAFER USE

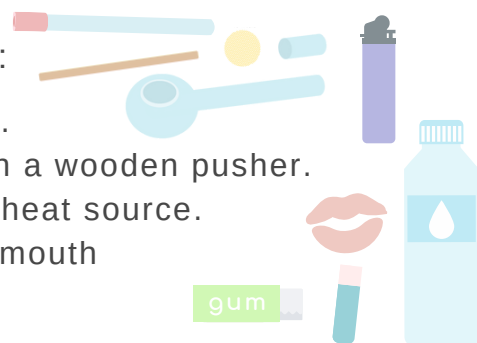
Empower yourself and the people you care about. Learn what you can do to reduce the risk - and increase the benefits - associated with substance use.



- **Know where what you're using came from.** Ask questions.
- **Don't use alone.** Use with someone you trust.
- **Use in a safe place,** like at home or at an overdose prevention clinic.
- **Take control** of what you use, how much you use, and how you use it.
- **Learn how to test** powders and pressed pills for **fentanyl**.
- **Start with a small amount. Start Low. Go slow.**
- **Rest, stay hydrated, eat healthy.**

If you are smoking with a glass pipe, please remember:

- **Use your own mouthpiece or pipe** to prevent infections.
- Keep particles out of your lungs. **Put filters in place** with a wooden pusher.
- **Use PYREX® (borosilicate) pipes** and a good, reliable heat source.
- **Drink water, use lip balm, and chew gum** to keep your mouth and lips moist and to help prevent cracks or blisters.



If you are snorting, please remember:

- Look at your drugs. Do they **smell, feel, and taste** like they should?
- Snort off of a fresh, **clean surface**.
- **Use a clean, new, disposable straw or spoon** - don't share.
- **Rinse your nostrils.** If they get irritated use lip balm or vitamin E oil.



If you are injecting, please remember:

- **When possible, learn how to safely** inject on your own so you don't have to depend on someone else to inject you.
- **Wash your hands** with soap and water for 20+ seconds.
- **Clean the skin** before every injection.
- Use **clean, sterile water**, a **cotton filter**, and a **disposable cooker**.
- If you need to dissolve your drugs, **use as little acid (vitamin C) as possible**.
- Use a **new syringe for each injection**.
- Use your own equipment. **Don't share**.
- Put used syringes in a thick, plastic **sharps container**.



Always store your substances and equipment safely and securely away from children.

SAFE STORAGE



Learn how to securely store your medications and substances.

Keep them up and away - and out of children's sight and reach.

* Ask everyone around you to do the same.

MEDICATIONS

- Keep prescription medications in their **original, childproof containers**.
- Store methadone take-homes in their **lock box**.
- Keep a **count** of what you have.



ALCOHOL

- Keep alcoholic beverages **up, away, and out of sight**.
- **Store drinks in their original containers**,
- Don't leave **open containers** or **drinking cups** unattended.
- Lock up booze in a **liquor cabinet** or use **bottle locks**.



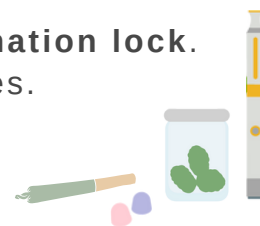
TOBACCO AND NICOTINE

- **Nicotine is toxic** - Keep nicotine products out of reach of kids and pets. Contact Poison Control in an emergency.
- Don't keep **nicotine gum** in your purse. Keep it in a **child-resistant container**.
- Keep vape juice and nicotine cartridges in their **child-proof packaging**.



CANNABIS PRODUCTS

- Keep your weed locked up. **Buy a box or bag** with a **combination lock**.
- Keep **vape cartridges** in child-proof containers between uses.
- Label **edibles** and store them **up, away, and out of sight**.
- Keep products you've bought from a **dispensary** in their original **child-resistant packaging**.



Put your medicines
up AND away
and out of sight

upandaway.org

In an **EMERGENCY**:

(800) 222-1222

Text **POISON** to
(301) 597-7137



Academy of Perinatal
Harm Reduction

www.perinatalharmreduction.org

HARM REDUCTION RESOURCES in YOUR COMMUNITY

Do you want to learn more about safer substance use and protecting your health and wellbeing?

Connect with these resources in your community:



HARM
REDUCTION
= LOVE

Chicago Recovery Alliance *"Any Positive Change"*

CRA provides a wide array of services to people who want to reduce drug-related harm in their lives and in their communities.

Their services include:

- Harm Reduction counseling
- guidance and support for substance use management (SUM)
- naloxone and overdose training
- referral to treatment
- Alliance for Collaborative Drug Checking - real-time drug checking using spectrometer machines and fentanyl test strips
- smoking and snorting materials, injecting equipment,
- safer sex supplies
- HIV and HCV counseling, testing & linkage to care

anypositivechange.org 

Community Outreach Intervention Projects

COIP offers services free to the public at five community-based locations throughout Chicago, in a friendly, open-door (no appointment needed) environment for people to drop in and seek help with a wide variety of problems. COIP also has a Mobile Outreach Unit to provide services anywhere in Chicago. All their services are offered by bilingual and multicultural staff.

coip.uic.edu 

JOLT *"Judgement free help is what we provide to ANY IN NEED"*

People who support harm reduction believe that human rights apply to everyone. People who use drugs do not forfeit their human rights. The advocates at Jolt believe that good healthcare and safe drug practices should be available. And that the focus should be on low-cost high-impact interventions.

joltfoundation.org 

