

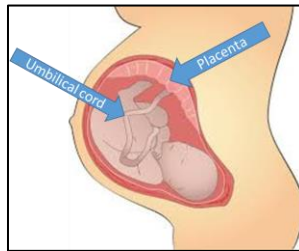
# Substances and Pregnancy

## What are substances?

“Substances” is another word for drugs. Some substances are legal (like alcohol, cigarettes, and prescribed pain pills) and other substances are not legal (like cocaine, ecstasy, heroin, LSD, meth, marijuana, and pain pills gotten from another person.)

## How do substances reach the baby in pregnancy?

During pregnancy, an organ called the placenta grows inside the womb along with the baby. The placenta lets oxygen and nutrition pass from the pregnant person’s blood through the umbilical cord to the baby.



When a person uses substances in pregnancy, those can also pass through the placenta and go through the umbilical cord to the baby.

## How can using substances in pregnancy affect the baby?

Not every baby will be affected. But using substances in pregnancy can increase the chances of:

- Miscarriage or stillbirth
- Birth defects
- Harm to the baby’s brain that can affect their development, learning, or behavior
- Baby not growing well
- Baby being born too soon
- Baby having withdrawal symptoms after birth

These effects on a baby can happen for other reasons too, not just from substances. Using substances in pregnancy can make the chances of them happening higher.

## Where can I get help?

Even if you have already used substances during a pregnancy, **it’s never too late** to get help with stopping or using less. A healthier YOU means a healthier baby!



If you need help to stop using a substance, talk to your healthcare provider or call 800-688-4232.

If you are worried about how substances might affect your baby, talk to your healthcare provider or call **MotherToBaby North Carolina** at 800-532-6302 (free and confidential).