

Dangers of Cigarette Smoking During Pregnancy

Any stimulants such as drugs, sugar, caffeine, cigarettes and any depressants such as drugs and alcohol are to be strictly avoided during pregnancy and nursing. These substances are highly addictive and can seriously interfere with the process of creating and nurturing a new life.

Not only is cigarette smoking harmful to the mother (lung disease, chronic cough, throat and lung cancer, lip and mouth cancer, reduced oxygen transport, etc.), it is also a leading cause of birth defects, low birth weight and severe neonatal issues including lung disease and difficulty breathing. Smoking is also a contributor to the rise in SIDS deaths. Even second-hand smoke can cause any one of these issues.

This is a very difficult habit to break, particularly if it has been an indulgence for a long period of time. The best way to break this habit is to replace it with a good habit. Often, changing one small thing can spark another small change that will lead us toward better health. As we change that one small thing (perhaps walking around the block each day, not having that glass of wine or that piece of cake with dinner, trying a nap instead of an aspirin for a headache, etc.), we must concentrate on the larger goal of a healthy mother and healthy baby.

There are programs and people that can help you if your addiction is serious. Smoking cessation programs are available in every town, acupuncture and hypnotherapy all have strong track records for helping with all types of addictions. Finding other pregnant women and creating a support circle with them as you fade out old friends who share your addictions is very empowering and brings many benefits beyond just breaking your addiction.

Herbal supplements can also help. Seek the advice of an herbalist who may suggest herbs including cayenne, passionflower and skullcap along with B vitamins, magnesium, and vitamins A, C and E.

The most important thing is to begin to make the change. Make the commitment to yourself and your unborn child. It is not easy, but it is so worth it.

Resources:

Nourishing Traditions, Sally Fallon; 2001 Revised 2nd Edition; ProMotion Pub.

Staying Healthy With Nutrition, Elson M. Haas; 1992, Celestial Arts Pub.

The Natural Pregnancy Book, Aviva Jill Romm; 2003, Celestial Arts Pub.

The How To Herb Book, Velma J. Keith and Monteen Gordon, 1987, 3rd Printing; Mayfield Pub.