

# Asthma and Pregnancy

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## Asthma and Pregnancy

### Effects on the Mother and Baby

Congratulations! Your pregnancy is an exciting event, and your visit to the doctor shows you care about staying healthy. You are breathing for two now, and you need to keep your asthma under control. By taking the steps listed here, you can control your asthma and protect your baby.

If you do not take these steps, you could lose control of your asthma. Asthma symptoms such as coughing, chest tightness, wheezing, and shortness of breath can keep your baby from getting enough oxygen to grow well. Your baby could be less healthy and smaller when born, or could even be born too early. But these things do not need to happen! Asthma can be controlled so you can have a normal pregnancy, labor and delivery and a healthy baby!

Here are steps you can take to control your asthma and protect your baby:

1. Work with your doctor and other health care providers.
  - Keep your appointments
  - Ask all the questions you have. Writing them down before each visit is a good idea so that you can be sure to remember them all.
  - Tell your doctor about any wheezing, coughing, or shortness of breath that you have.
2. Take your medications
  - Follow directions exactly about when to take your asthma medicine(s) and how much medicine to take.
  - Don't stop taking your asthma medicine unless your doctor directs you.
  - Get your doctor's okay before you take ANY new medications or over-the-counter drugs (drugs you choose yourself at the store such as headache, cough and cold medicine).
  - Remember, using asthma medicine during pregnancy is much safer than letting your asthma get out of control. Asthma medicine such as cromolyn, Tilade, inhaled beta agonist drugs, and inhaled steroids are safe for pregnant

women when you take them as directed by your doctor. So take your medicine and control your asthma!

### 3. Watch your asthma and treat symptoms fast

- Pregnancy is a time of change. Your asthma can change fast as well and can get worse, better or stay the same. If this is your first pregnancy, there is no way to predict what will happen with your asthma. If you have been pregnant before, your asthma is most likely to change or not change the same way it did with your first pregnancy. It is very important for you to watch your asthma closely.
- Use a peak flow meter each day so you can find any changes in your asthma and act early.
- Know how to tell if your asthma is getting worse. Make a list with your doctor of the ways you can tell if you asthma is getting worse.
- Make a plan with your doctor for dealing with any sign that your asthma is getting worse. Use it.

### 4. Asthma Triggers

- Your asthma triggers are those things that you know make your asthma worse. House dust mites or damp places, animals, tobacco smoke, and very cold air are some examples of asthma triggers. You can stay away from some triggers. For other allergies, you can take action to keep them from bothering your asthma. Your doctor will provide you literature on asthma triggers.

### 5. Do not smoke or stay around people who smoke

- Cigarette smoke makes it more likely that you will have an asthma episode.
- Smoking during pregnancy makes it more likely that your baby will be born too early and too small. Your baby is more likely to be sick more often too.
- If babies breathe in other people's smoke, the babies lungs will not grow and work as well as they should. The baby is likely to have more colds and earaches.
- When babies live with people who smoke, they have a greater chance of developing asthma.
- If you smoke, now is the time to stop! Your doctor or nurse will help you! Ask them.

## Answers to some Common Questions

- Are asthma medicines safe for pregnant women? Yes, asthma medicines are safe when you take them as directed by your doctor. It is very important for your baby's health that you keep your asthma under good control!
- Can I exercise? Yes, you can exercise. Exercise is important and you should be able to be physically active without having asthma symptoms. Talk to your doctor about his.
- Can I take allergy shots? Yes, allergy shots can be continued if you were getting them before you were pregnant. Allergy shots should not be started for the first time while you are pregnant.

- Should I get a flu shot? Yes, you can get a flu shot. These are made from dead viruses that will not harm you or your baby. Flu shots are often recommended for people who have asthma.
- What happens if I get an asthma episode (or “attack”) during labor or delivery? Asthma episodes usually do not occur during labor and delivery. If asthma symptoms do occur, you will receive prompt treatment and you and your baby will be watched carefully. Your asthma will be controlled so you can have a normal labor and delivery.
- Will my breast milk be safe for my baby? Yes, it is safe. Very little asthma medicine will get to your baby through your breast milk. The small amount in the breast milk will not harm your baby.
- Will my baby have asthma? Perhaps. A child is more likely to have asthma when one or both parents have asthma or allergies.

### 5 Star!

Dr Richard Mayse  
& all the staff are  
exceptional!

— *Janice Raver*

### TRAAC Staff

The staff at Texas  
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standing by to help you!  
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