

# Smoking during Pregnancy

It's never too late to quit, but the earlier the better for both the mother and her baby.

## Myth: Smoking during pregnancy won't hurt the baby.

- Smoking nearly doubles a woman's risk of having a low birthweight baby, which can result from poor growth before birth, preterm delivery or both. Smoking has long been known to slow a baby's growth.
- There is a greater chance that a woman will lose her baby during pregnancy if she smokes.
- Smoking could cause the baby to be born too early, before the lungs are developed.



## Myth: Babies often weigh less when the mother smokes, and it's easier to deliver a small baby.

- It's not always easier to deliver a low birthweight baby.
- Smaller babies are more likely to need special care and stay longer in the hospital.
- More low birthweight babies born to mothers who smoke will die either at birth or within the first year than full-term healthy babies.

## Myth: Cigarette smoke doesn't get through to the unborn baby.

- When the mother smokes, so does the baby. Smokers take in nicotine and carbon monoxide (the same gas that comes out of a car's exhaust pipe).
- These poisons get into the placenta, the tissue that connects mother and baby before it is born. They keep the unborn baby from getting the food and oxygen needed to grow.



## Myth: A woman will gain extra weight if she quits smoking during pregnancy.

- Most women need to gain some weight during pregnancy.
- Smoking is much more dangerous for a pregnant woman and her baby than even large amounts of weight she may gain.



## Myth: Cutting down on cigarettes instead of quitting completely is good enough.

- The only way to really protect your unborn baby is to quit.
- Cutting down does not make things much better for the baby.
- People who cut back on the number of cigarettes they smoke become more efficient smokers.
- This means they inhale more deeply or take more puffs and get the same amount of nicotine as before from fewer cigarettes.

## Myth: When a woman waits until later in her pregnancy to quit smoking, it won't do any good.

- Quitting within the first three/four months can reduce a baby's chance of being born too small or with health problems.
- If a woman stops smoking by the end of her second trimester, she is no more likely to have a low birthweight baby than a woman who never smoked.
- Smoking cigarettes doubles a woman's risk of developing problems with the placenta that can result in heavy bleeding during delivery, endangering mother and baby.

