
Asthma and Pregnancy

When you are pregnant and have asthma, the most important thing you can do is keep your asthma under control. When your asthma is under control, you can have a normal pregnancy, delivery and healthy baby. Asthma that is not controlled may lead to premature delivery, low birth weight and more problems at birth.

When you are planning for pregnancy

- Have your asthma under control.
- Aim to be as physically fit as you can.
- Have a flu shot in September or October.
- Choose your health care provider well. You may need an asthma specialist to work with your health care provider. It is important that your health care provider and asthma specialist consult with each other.

When you are pregnant

When your asthma is under control, you can take the least amount of medication needed to avoid an acute attack. The risk to mother and baby from uncontrolled asthma is far greater than any known risks from asthma medications. You are breathing for you and your baby.

Avoid triggers such as tobacco smoke, scents and paint fumes, housedust mites, animal dander and people with colds and flu.

Do not smoke. Smoking during pregnancy increases the baby's chances of having respiratory problems. It also increases your risk of asthma attacks.



Do not start allergy shots during pregnancy. If you are already getting allergy shots, you can keep getting them if the dose is the same. Your health care provider will monitor this.

When you are pregnant

Some women find their asthma gets worse between 24 and 36 weeks. It then tends to get better between 37 to 40 weeks.

Many women without asthma find it harder to breathe during the last 3 months of pregnancy as well.

Medications

Talk to your health care provider about all medications, herbal products, natural products and over the counter medications you take or plan to take while you are pregnant or breastfeeding.

Make sure all of your health care providers are aware of all of the medications you are taking.

Taking inhaled medications is better than tablets or liquid because they go right into the lungs instead of through the blood. Using a spacer device also helps the medication go right to the lungs.

Labour and delivery

Plan your labour and delivery with your health care providers. Talk about natural childbirth. When asthma is controlled, most women can use breathing exercises without any problems.

If you need to have a Cesarean birth, you may need to stop medications 9 to 12 hours before surgery.

After delivery, you may find coughing painful but this can be helped with medications and other methods.

Breastfeeding

Keep on taking your asthma medication to control asthma when breastfeeding. Most asthma medications are secreted into breast milk in very low amounts. These amounts are considered safe for babies.

Watch for signs of change in your baby such as irritability, restlessness, changes in feeding patterns, changes in bowel movements and rash. If you have concerns or questions, talk to your health care provider.