

# PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

## How They Affect Your Baby



It's always a good idea to consult with your health care provider before using any drug during your pregnancy. Any drug that you take passes through the umbilical cord and into your baby's body. There are risks and benefits to all prescription drugs.

Make sure to follow your health care provider's recommendations and talk to him or her about any medications you may be taking, even if they are over the counter medications.

Your health care provider may prescribe medications for pain relief, sleep disturbances, allergies, stomach ailments, depression or other mental health conditions. Just because a health care provider has previously prescribed a medication does not mean it is safe to continue using this medication during your pregnancy.

Once you find out you are pregnant, consult your health care provider immediately to determine if you should continue taking your prescription medications. Your health care provider may recommend another form of treatment during your pregnancy.

Some women may become addicted to prescription drugs or may use prescription drugs for purposes other than they were originally intended. Abusing prescription drugs during your pregnancy is especially dangerous and can lead to serious, long-term health complications for your baby.

Abuse of prescription drugs is a rising problem in America. The most commonly abused categories of prescription drugs are opioids, such as Morphine; central nervous

system depressants, such as Prozac; and central nervous system stimulants, such as Ritalin.

If you abuse prescription drugs during your pregnancy, your baby may experience any of the following:

- Low birth weight
- Withdrawal symptoms
- Physical dependency
- Birth defects
- Heart abnormalities
- Enlarged thyroid
- Developmental and/or growth delays

### *The good news is:*

It is never too late to stop abusing prescription drugs during your pregnancy! No matter how far along you are in your pregnancy, it is better for your baby if you quit. The baby's brain and body will grow better if you stop.



**Talk to your health care provider. Ask for help. Start living healthier for you and your baby today!**

*Content adapted from materials created by Zero Exposure Project: An Initiative of the Healthy Start Coalition of Hillsborough County, Inc.*

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### **For questions or further information:**

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