



## cannabis use and reproduction

Cannabis is the most commonly used illegal drug amongst women of a child bearing age.

Little is known about the effects of cannabis on unborn babies but it is strongly recommended that pregnant women do not use drugs.

### cannabis and fertility

- cannabis can cause disruption to menstrual periods and decrease fertility
- cannabis can affect sperm quality and movement
- cannabis may cause abnormal sperm
- these factors mean that cannabis use can make it difficult to fall pregnant

### the effect of cannabis on pregnancy

- THC can pass from the mother to the foetus, which may affect the foetus
- using cannabis increases the risk of giving birth to a low birth-weight baby
- smoking any drug can affect the oxygen and nutrients unborn babies receive from the mother
- smoking any substance can cause premature (early) birth
- smoking tobacco (some people use tobacco and cannabis together) has been linked to miscarriage, still-birth and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)

### babies whose mothers have used cannabis

- in the first month of their lives these babies are more likely to startle, tremor and not see as well as other babies
- in the first six months these babies are more at risk of having asthma, chest infections and other breathing problems
- using cannabis should be avoided if breastfeeding
- getting THC through breast milk can cause babies to be unsettled

### Take home message:

If you are pregnant or want to have a baby soon and are using cannabis, tell your community nurse, doctor or health worker about it; they are there to help support you and your family, and will be able to help you cut down and even stop using cannabis