

Overview

September 2026

Cannabis use during pregnancy has been increasing, with self-reported data ranging from 2-5% for all women using cannabis and 15%-28 among women who are young, urban and socioeconomically disadvantaged. Misconceptions have spread regarding cannabis use as treatment for commonly known side effects of pregnancy, such as nausea (morning sickness), boosting appetite, lowering stress, pain, and insomnia.

However, research indicates that prenatal exposure may increase the risk of anemia and cyclic vomiting, and even *Cannabis Hyperemesis Syndrome**. Consistent with guidance from the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the CDC, and the FDA, **IDOH advises against using cannabis during pregnancy and while breastfeeding.**

Potential Behavioral Consequences

Using cannabis while pregnant can cause issues such as:

- Fetal growth restriction
- Low birth weight
- Preterm delivery
- Miscarriages
- Increased risk of neonatal ICU admission

Effects of cannabis use during pregnancy can lead to changes in the development of newborn brains, which can continue after the baby is born and last into childhood:

- Low scores on cognitive assessments, particularly in areas of memory, attention, and problem-solving
- Impulsivity, attention deficits, and aggression
- Anxiety, depression, and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- Difficulties in executive functions, such as planning, decision-making, and inhibitory control
- Increased vulnerability to substance use disorders later in life



***Cannabis hyperemesis syndrome (CHS) is a condition presenting with severe and refractory nausea and vomiting with abdominal pain in regular cannabis users.**

For additional information on substance use during pregnancy:

[in.gov/health/mch/families/substance-use-and-pregnancy](https://www.in.gov/health/mch/families/substance-use-and-pregnancy)

References: Cannabis and Pregnancy | Cannabis and Public Health | CDC

Cannabis Use During Pregnancy | AAFP

Cannabis Use during Pregnancy: An Update - PMC