

Stimulants

Substance/ Street Name	Duration Of Action	Effects On User	Effect On Pregnancy	Treatment Options	Effects On Lactation
Tobacco Cigarettes	Nicotine can reach the brain within 7 seconds of inhaling cigarette smoke. Duration of action is approximately ¼ - 2 hours.	Claims to alleviate anxiety and stress and promotes relaxation and enhances mood. Increase pulse rate and tremor, decreased appetite.	Carbon monoxide decreases placental blood flow resulting in fetal hypoxia and subsequent increased incidence of intrauterine growth retardation, and consequent low birth weight of infant	Nicotine replacement therapy (gum, patches or inhaler) is not recommended in pregnancy. Woman should be counselled about risks to baby.	Nicotine is excreted into breast milk, with the amount equating to the amount inhaled through passive smoking. High levels of nicotine in the blood can cause vomiting, diarrhoea, irritability and increased heart rate in the infant. Smoking should be avoided in the presence of the infant to reduce the risk of SIDS.
Caffeine No-Doz, Coffee, Tea, cola drinks, chocolate	2–12 hours	Restlessness, stomach upset, alertness, physical endurance and decreased fatigue. Extent of effect is variable in different individuals. Can be harmful for people with heart problems.	No significant effect unless taken in chronic doses – which is not achievable by standard normal coffee/tea consumption.	No specific treatment available. Caffeine free coffee or tea may be used as a substitute.	Minimal amounts of caffeine enter breast milk. Caffeine is unlikely to cause a problem unless it is taken in high or frequent amounts.
Amphetamine Speed, Whiz, Uppers	4 – 8 hours	Highly stimulating. Increases blood pressure, alertness, insomnia, restlessness, headaches and stamina. General excitation, increase in self confidence, aggression and impulsiveness. Decreases appetite.	Can result in limb malformation, premature birth, placental abruption and intra-uterine growth retardation. Maternal abuse during the third trimester can cause neonatal drowsiness and withdrawal.	Cessation of use with counselling, support and necessary life style modifications.	Amphetamine concentrates in breast milk and causes irritability and disturbed sleep in exposed infants. Long term effects are unknown.

Stimulants cont'd

Substance/ Street Name	Duration Of Action	Effects On User	Effect On Pregnancy	Treatment Options	Effects On Lactation
Cocaine Pure form of Crack	Smoking crack: ½-2 hours. Snorting cocaine: 15min-½ hour. Injecting cocaine: immediate and peaks at a few minutes.	Increased self confidence, alertness, excitement, euphoria and decreased fatigue. Cardiac toxicity is a serious adverse effect. Perforation of the nasal septum and rhinorrhea are associated with regular snorting	Decreased placental blood flow and fetal hypoxia results.	Cessation of use with counselling, support and necessary lifestyle modifications.	Cocaine is excreted into breast milk and is absorbed orally by the infant. Has the potential to cause vomiting, diarrhoea, irritability and seizures in the infant. Long term effect unknown.
Pseudoephedrine Sudafed	4–6 hrs for 60mg 10–12 hrs for 120mg	Increased blood pressure, insomnia.	As above	Avoid taking Sudafed. Nasal sprays should be used for nasal congestion.	Pseudoephedrine is excreted in small amounts in breast milk. It can cause irritability and sleep disturbances in exposed infants.
MDMA Ecstasy, Adam, XTC, M,E	7 – 8 hours	Less hallucinogenic and stimulatory effects than amphetamines. Emotional effects are more pronounced. Promotes emotional harmony and reduces hostility.	As above.	Cessation with counselling, support and necessary lifestyle modifications is the best option.	Ecstasy can cause some level of irritability in the exposed infant. Long term effects are unknown.
Methyl-amphetamine Ice, Crystal	Long lasting, at least 10 – 12 hours.	Impaired judgement, pronounced stimulatory effects, violence is possible. High doses may produce mania. This drug is highly addictive.	As above	Cessation of use with counselling, support and necessary lifestyle modifications.	Methylamphetamine can cause irritability in the exposed infant. Long term effects are unknown.

Depressants

Substance/ Street Name	Duration Of Action	Effects On User	Effect On Pregnancy	Treatment Options	Effects On Lactation
Alcohol	Dependent on dose.	Slurred speech, loss of inhibition, general relaxation. May induce either a sense of well being or depression.	Effect is dependent on amount consumed. Fetal alcohol syndrome is a condition of neonates whose mothers who consumed large amounts of alcohol during pregnancy. Effects include growth retardation, CNS dysfunction and facial abnormalities.	Alcohol withdrawal in pregnancy is usually assisted by using diazepam to help calm tremors. Drugs such as Antabuse and Campral are not recommended to assist alcohol withdrawals during pregnancy.	Freely excreted into the breastmilk and can affect the taste and potentially decrease infant intake. Occasional, moderate use does not appear to be harmful. Heavy consumption can inhibit milk supply. Women should allow for 2 hrs per standard drink before breastfeeding.
Benzo-diazepines Diazepam, Oxaxepam, Flunitrazepam	Dependent on the drug used.	Lack of muscle tone, relief of anxiety and tension, induces sleep.	No increased risk of birth defects. Can cause respiratory depression, hypotonia, decreased feeding and lack of weight gain post-natally. Neonates may show signs of withdrawal.	When several benzodiazepines are used, an overall dose of diazepam should be used and slowly decreased over a few weeks.	Is excreted in small amounts in breast milk, but has the potential to accumulate in the infant. Oxazepam is preferred in breast-feeding due to its shorter half life and lower lipid solubility. May cause sedation and poor feeding when used in high or prolonged doses.
Cannabis Marijuana, grass, dope, weed, pot, hemp	Depending on the method of consumption. Complete elimination requires several weeks after a single dose.	Increased relaxation and food craving, loss of concentration and time orientation. Blood shot eyes, increased heart rate. Can be hallucinogenic.	Cannabis has similar risks to the fetus as cigarette smoking - increased incidence of intrauterine growth retardation, and consequent low birth weight of infant.	Cessation of use with counselling, support and necessary lifestyle modifications.	Breastfeeding is regarded as unsafe as THC can accumulate in fatty tissue of the baby. It is important to avoid smoking in the presence of the infant to reduce the risk of SIDS.
Opiates Heroin	Injecting heroin: 4-6 hours. If smoked, sensations may be prolonged.	Relief of pain and anxiety, decreased awareness, drowsiness, shallow and decreased breathing, pin-point pupils.	No increased risk of birth defects. Can cause respiratory depression, hypotonia, decreased feeding and weight gain post-natally. Baby may show signs of withdrawal.	Pregnant women should not detox from heroin. Methadone substitution has the best outcomes for the mother and baby.	A small amount of heroin is excreted in breast milk. May cause tremor, vomiting, restlessness and poor feeding. Breastfeeding is contraindicated if mother is intoxicated or HIV positive.

Hallucinogens

Substance/ Street Name	Duration Of Action	Effects On User	Effect On Pregnancy	Treatment Options	Effects On Lactation
Volatile substances Petrol, glue aerosol cans, butane gas	½ hour, dependent on the substance inhaled.	Euphoria. Chronic use is associated with decreased concentration, insomnia and nightmares. Peripheral and central neurological damage, renal failure, liver failure and acidosis have been reported.	Volatile substances cross the placenta and can cause an early labour, premature birth and associated breathing problems and risks of infection.	Cessation of use with counselling, support and necessary lifestyle modifications.	Most volatile substances have very short half lives. Breastfeeding should not cause problems for the infant unless it occurs whilst the mother is intoxicated.
LSD Trips, acid	Long lasting, at least 10 – 12 hours	During the first ½ hour, flushing, increased heart rate, dry mouth and tremor. Followed by euphoria, time distortion, visual and auditory hallucinations and de-personalisation. Psychosis can become a chronic problem.	Research on the use of LSD in pregnancy is limited. The association of birth defects and LSD use is unlikely.	Cessation of use with counselling, support and necessary lifestyle modifications.	Little is know on the use of LSD during lactation. After oral administration LSD is rapidly distributed throughout the body. As LSD is potent at an extremely low dose, breastfeeding should be avoided.
PSP Phencyclidine Angel Dust, GBH, Peace Pill Crystal, Hog sheets Rocketfuel, Elephant, Monkey tranquilizer	6 hours, but effect may take several days to wear off.	Thought distortion, exaggerated sensation, general hallucination affecting visual and sensory function and increased pain tolerance.	Associated with birth defects. Long term behaviour and neurological effects have been observed in infants of women who abused PCP during pregnancy.	Cessation of use with counselling, support and necessary lifestyle modifications.	PCP is stored in fatty tissue and can therefore accumulate and concentrate in breast milk. Breast-feeding is not recommended.

This chart is for the use of health professionals only