

A Healthier Tomorrow Starts Today

Substance Use and Birth Defects

We want our children to reach their fullest, healthiest potential. Together we can promote healthy pregnancies and lower the risk of birth defects. A healthier tomorrow starts today!

What are Birth Defects?

- Birth defects are health conditions present when a baby is born.
- They can cause problems with a baby's health, how their body develops, or how their body works.
- They can impact a baby's brain, heart, head, spine, limbs, organs, bones, and cognitive development.

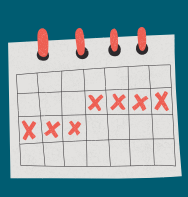
Certain actions taken before and during pregnancy can reduce the risk of birth defects.

6 Tips to Reduce the Risk of Birth Defects:

1. Eat a healthy diet and get enough folic acid
2. Connect with prenatal care **early and throughout your pregnancy**
3. Stay up to date on vaccinations
4. Avoid tobacco, alcohol, and other substance use
5. Get tested for sexually transmitted infections
6. Get help if your basic needs – **safety, housing, and food** – are not being met



Substance Use Before Pregnancy



If you are planning to become pregnant, now is the time to stop or reduce your use of tobacco, alcohol, and other substances.

If there is a chance you may become pregnant, but are not ready to have a baby, it's important to **use reliable birth control that works for you!**

If you need help finding or paying for birth control, contact Well Badger. There are options available!



Substance Use During Pregnancy

Using any of these substances can impact your pregnancy and your baby's long-term health:

- Tobacco
- Alcohol
- Cannabis
- Illicit substances or
- Misusing prescription drugs



There is no safe amount of substance use during pregnancy.

Regular use of substances can lead to a substance use disorder. If concerned about your substance use, talk to your health care provider, or call the **Wisconsin Addiction Recovery Helpline at 2-1-1.**

Some over-the-counter and prescription medications are okay to use during pregnancy. **Check with your prenatal care provider!**

Using any substance (alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, etc.) can cause serious health problems including:

- Preterm birth
- Low birth weight
- Stillbirth
- Infant death
- Birth defects

The best way to keep yourself & your baby healthy is to **stop or reduce** substance use during pregnancy.

Using substances during pregnancy increases the risk of the following birth defects:

• Cleft lip or palate
These conditions happen when parts of the mouth, upper lip and/or gum do not fuse (come together) completely.

• Club foot
These are foot abnormalities. The baby's foot is twisted out of shape or rotated inward.

• Congenital heart defects
Baby's heart develops throughout pregnancy. Sometimes, there are problems with how it forms such as a small hole, malformed parts, or missing parts.

• Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD)
FASDs are a range of life-long problems and conditions that can affect a person exposed to alcohol in utero (in the womb). They can include:

- certain facial features
- small head and low body weight
- problems with coordination, attention, and memory
- learning problems
- speech and language delays
- vision or hearing problems or
- physical problems

Steps You Can Take Today

CONNECT WITH FIRST BREATH

First Breath is a free, statewide program committed to helping people make positive changes to their tobacco, alcohol and other substance use during pregnancy and beyond.

FIRST BREATH
No judgment. Just support.

- **Talk to your healthcare provider about First Breath**
- **Call (608) 888-2768**
- **Text the word "BABY" to 29669**
- **Visit joinfirstbreath.org**

CONTACT WELL BADGER

Well Badger is a free, statewide program that connects people to the health and social services they need and deserve.

WELL BADGER RESOURCE CENTER

- **Call 1 (800) 642-7837**
- **Text (608) 360-9328**
- **Email help@wellbadger.org**
- **Visit wellbadger.org to chat live or search the online directory of free and low-cost services**

A Healthier Tomorrow Starts Today

*Learn more about other ways to prevent birth defects at **healthier-tomorrow.org***