



The Impact of Substance Use During Pregnancy

- Medications, drugs or alcohol taken during pregnancy can affect a woman's health and the health of her developing baby. Substance exposure before birth can also affect a baby after being born.
- Newborns affected by exposure to any opioid-containing substance in utero may experience withdrawal symptoms after delivery. These substances include prescription medications for pain or for treatment of opioid use disorder and illicit opioids such as heroin or fentanyl.
- The medical term for withdrawal symptoms in a newborn is **Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS)**. Risk of NAS may increase if the baby is prenatally exposed to nicotine or medications like antidepressants and benzodiazepines.
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders** can occur in a child whose mother drank alcohol during pregnancy. These effects can include physical problems and problems with behavior and learning. There is no known safe amount of alcohol during pregnancy.

What You Should Know About Using Cannabis

Cannabis — also known as marijuana, weed, pot or hash — is legal for adults aged 21 and older in Rhode Island, but using cannabis can impact you and your baby now and in the future. Reducing certain risks can help lower your chances of harm.

- ✔ **Avoid cannabis if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.** Cannabis use during pregnancy can be harmful to a baby's health. The chemicals in cannabis, particularly THC, can pass through to a baby and may harm their development.
- ✔ **Consider your medical and family history.** Age, genetics and certain conditions increase the risk of mental and physical health issues, cognitive problems or cannabis use disorder.
- ✔ **Don't drive high.** It's illegal and dangerous to yourself and others.
- ✔ **Plan ahead.** Make sure you are in a comfortable and familiar place with others, and don't take on any important tasks or responsibilities.
- ✔ **Don't mix substances.** Using cannabis with alcohol, tobacco or other drugs is very risky and could have severe consequences.
- ✔ **Start low and go slow.** Try a small amount at first and wait to see how you feel before taking any more. If possible, seek cannabis products with a lower total THC content.
- ✔ **Be careful with edibles.** The effects may be delayed and can last up to 12 hours.
- ✔ **Store cannabis products securely.** Lock them up and place them out of reach of kids and pets.
- ✔ **Buy from a regulated dispensary.** Licensed dispensaries are required to test products for THC content and contaminants.



Resources

The State of Rhode Island offers help for substance use conditions.

- **988 Lifeline**
Call or text 988 or chat with 988 at 988lifeline.org to connect with a trained crisis counselor for support. Hablamos español.
- **BH Link Walk-In Triage Center, 975 Waterman Ave., East Providence**
A 24/7 community-based, walk-in/drop-off facility where clinicians connect people to immediate, stabilizing emergency behavioral health services and long-term care and recovery supports. Visit BHLink.org.
- **PreventOverdoseRI.org (PORI)**
PORI offers information on local treatment and recovery support services, free naloxone and overdose reversal training and more. Visit preventoverdoseRI.org.
- **Rhode Island's Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics**
Adults seeking help for themselves or a loved one with a substance use condition can reach out to a Rhode Island Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC). These outpatient clinics offer expanded behavioral health services. Visit bhddh.ri.gov/CCBHC.
Community Care Alliance, Woonsocket, 401-235-7000
Family Service of Rhode Island, Providence, 401-519-2280
Gateway Healthcare, Pawtucket, Johnston and South County, 401-729-8701
Newport Mental Health, Newport County, 401-846-1213
The Providence Center, Providence, 401-276-4020
Thrive Behavioral Health, Warwick, 401-738-4300