

SMOKING DURING PREGNANCY

HOW CAN SMOKING AFFECT MY PREGNANCY?

Women who smoke during pregnancy are more likely than those who do not smoke to have serious problems during pregnancy. These problems include:

- Preterm labor – This is labor that starts before 37 weeks of pregnancy (3 or more weeks before the woman’s due date). Pregnancy normally lasts about 40 weeks, counting from the first day of the woman’s last period. Going into labor before 37 weeks of pregnancy can be dangerous, because babies who are born preterm (also called “premature”) can have serious health problems.
- Problems with the placenta – These can include “placenta previa” and “placental abruption.” Placenta previa happens when the placenta covers the opening of the cervix. Placental abruption happens when the placenta separates from the mother’s uterus before the baby is born. Both of these problems can cause bleeding from the vagina.
- Miscarriage – A miscarriage is when a pregnancy ends before a woman has been pregnant for 20 weeks.
- Stillbirth – A stillbirth is when a baby dies before it is born, in the second half of pregnancy (after 20 weeks).

How can smoking during pregnancy affect my baby?

Babies whose mothers smoke during pregnancy are more likely than babies whose mothers do not smoke to:

- Be premature or be born too small – Babies who are premature or small are more likely to have problems with feeding, sleeping, breathing, seeing and hearing.
- Die suddenly for no known reason before the age of 1 year (this is called “sudden infant death syndrome or SIDS)

References:

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