
Protect Your Newborn from Cigarette Smoke

You've likely heard about the dangers of secondhand smoke. But did you know that cigarette smoke is even worse for babies than it is for adults? Now that you've brought your newborn home, it's crucial to keep cigarette smoke away from the baby. You may have already quit smoking when you found out you were going to have a baby. If not, it's still not too late. If anyone else in your household smokes, now is the time for them to quit. If you or someone else in the household keeps smoking, you can at least make changes to protect the baby. This goes for anyone who spends time near the baby, including grandparents, friends, and babysitters.

How cigarette smoke can harm your baby

Research shows that smoking around newborns can cause severe health problems. These include:

- Asthma or other lifelong breathing problems
- Colds, ear infections, and other respiratory problems get worse
- Poor growth and development, both mentally and physically
- Higher chance of SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome)
- Learning problems and ADHD

Protecting your baby from smoke

If someone in your household smokes and isn't ready to quit, you can still protect your baby. Ban smoking inside the house and the car. Any smoker (including you, if you smoke) should smoke only outside, away from windows and doors.

Thirdhand smoke refers to smoke and toxic chemicals left on clothes and other surfaces in the area of a smoker. When you or someone else smokes outside and then holds the baby, smoke and toxic chemicals can be transferred to the baby. Wear clean clothes when you hold the baby.

Never let anyone smoke around the baby. And never take the baby into an area where people are smoking. If you have visitors who smoke, you may want to explain your smoking rules before they come over, so they know what to expect.

Quitting is BEST for your baby

If you smoke, quitting is the best thing you can do for your baby and for yourself. Quitting is hard, but you can do it! Here are some tips:

- Tape a picture of your newborn to your pack of cigarettes. Look at it each time you smoke. This will remind you of the best reason to quit.
- Join a support group or stop smoking class. This will give you the support and skills you need to quit smoking. You may even meet other parents in the same situation. If

you need help finding a group or class, your healthcare provider can suggest 1 in your area.

- Ask other smokers in the family to quit with you. This way, you can support each other.
- Talk with your healthcare provider about your desire to stop smoking. Both counseling and medicines can help you successfully quit smoking.
- If you don't succeed the first time, try again! Many people have to try more than once before they quit for good. Just remember, you're doing it for your baby. Trying to quit is better for your baby and yourself than if you'd never tried at all.

For more information

- [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services at smokefree.gov/talk-to-an-expert](https://www.smokefree.gov/talk-to-an-expert)
- National Cancer Institute Smoking Quitline at 877-44U-QUIT (877-448-7848)