

**Patient  
Information**

# Amphetamines and pregnancy

## Introduction

This leaflet provides information about how amphetamines can affect you and your unborn baby if taken during the pregnancy.

## What are Amphetamines?

Amphetamines are a type of stimulant drug. Recreational amphetamines may be mixed with other powders like glucose, vitamin C, laxative, dried baby milk, Caffeine, or other drugs such as Paracetamol or Aspirin. Using non prescribed medicines could be harmful for both you and your baby.

## Is Amphetamine use affecting my baby?

Research has shown that amphetamine use during pregnancy is associated with a slight increase in the risk of babies having cleft lip and cleft palate. Babies may also be smaller than average and be born prematurely. After birth the babies may experience some mild withdrawal symptoms and be slightly irritable, difficult to handle and have feeding difficulties.

## How does Amphetamine use affect the mother?

Pregnancy puts an extra strain on your body. If you use amphetamine as well, it may lead to complications such as irregular heartbeat.

If you are using a lot of amphetamines and are not looking after yourself it may mean that your pregnancy is not well monitored.

It is important to have a good diet whilst you are pregnant. Absorption of nutrients may be affected by your amphetamine use, which can impact upon your baby's health.

## What should I do if am using amphetamines?

It is strongly recommended that pregnant women do not use amphetamines. **Taking amphetamines intravenously is particularly harmful to you and your unborn baby.**

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Stopping the amphetamine suddenly will not cause any problems to your baby but may cause you to experience some withdrawal symptoms such as depression, irritability, cravings and poor sleep.

Help is available for these symptoms via medication, psychological support, and alternative therapies such as: acupuncture, practical help and counselling.

### **Should I be tested for Hepatitis or HIV?**

HIV and Hepatitis testing is offered to all pregnant women regardless of whether or not they have used drugs in the past. These infections can be transmitted via sexual intercourse, by blood transfusion, by needle stick injuries, or by sharing needles or other injecting equipment.

There is also a slight chance that babies may be infected from their mothers during pregnancy and labour. If you are HIV positive the obstetricians and midwives will be able to give advice about labour and delivery to make transmission to the baby less likely.

If you are positive for Hepatitis C your baby can be followed up closely by the paediatrician and treated as necessary. You may be referred to the Liver Specialist for treatment.

### **What should I do if I am not in treatment for substance misuse?**

The most important thing is to tell someone. Your General Practitioner (GP), midwife or obstetrician can arrange for you to be seen by **Turning Point** (the county substance misuse service) who can organise treatment and help co-ordinate your care in pregnancy.

Alternatively, you can contact Turning Point yourself for further advice and counselling at [www.turningpoint.co.uk](http://www.turningpoint.co.uk) or the contact numbers are listed on the next page.

### **Contact information**

**Turning Point  
Cheltenham**

Tel: 01242 537570

Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 5:00pm

**Patient  
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**Forest of Dean**

Tel: 01594 820194

Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 5:00pm

**Gloucester**

Tel: 01452 509500

Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 5:00pm

**Stroud**

Tel: 01453 847700

Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 5:00pm

**Drug and alcohol specialist midwives**

Tel: 07890 540240

Tel: 07884 260352

Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 5:00pm

**Triage**

Gloucestershire Royal Hospital

Tel: 0300 421 5541

Available 24 hours a day 365 days a year

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