



Cannabis use in pregnancy

Patient information factsheet

- This leaflet contains information about the risks of cannabis use in pregnancy for you and your unborn baby. It also provides information about where you can get help to quit.
- It is important that you are open and honest about your cannabis use. Your Midwife will continue to monitor your current use so that together, you can agree a safe plan of care for you and your baby.

What is cannabis?

- Cannabis is the most widely used drug in the UK.
- It contains a substance called tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) which causes a 'high' but can also lead to problematic side effects such as drowsiness, nausea and mental health issues (anxiety, paranoia and psychosis).
- Most cannabis bought in the UK has a very high level of THC. This makes it much stronger than the cannabis used in the past.

Risks for you

- Using cannabis can cause mental health problems, even if you've never had them before.
- It can also make any mental health problems you already have worse.
- If you start using cannabis when you are young, you are more likely to have mental health problems because THC can affect your growing brain.

Risks for your baby

THC can pass through your placenta (an organ that provides nutrients and oxygen to the baby and helps remove waste from the baby's blood) to your baby, while you are pregnant, and might affect how your baby develops.

Your baby is at increased risk of:

- Being born prematurely (before full term).
- Being born with a low birthweight.
- Increased chance of needing care in the Neonatal Unit after birth.
- Learning, behavioural and mental health issues as they grow up, including substance misuse.



Your Maternity care

- Your Midwife will arrange for you to have regular growth scans so we can monitor the growth of your baby.
- You can also be seen by our specialist Perinatal Mental Health Team if you feel that you would like some support with your mental health. Please ask your Midwife who can refer you.
- Please let your Midwife know if you are experiencing any other issues that are affecting your life, for example, your relationships, money or housing. This is so we can help you to access the right support.
- If you are struggling with your cannabis use and/or any other issues, we will need to consider how this is affecting you and your ability to meet your baby's needs.
- In some circumstances, this may result in your Midwife making a referral to Children's Services. This is done in partnership with you to ensure that you and your baby are safe.

Breastfeeding

- Because cannabis will transfer through your breastmilk to your baby, we do not advise you to breastfeed if you are using cannabis.

How can we help you?

- As the healthcare professionals supporting you and your baby, **we strongly recommend that you stop using cannabis**. We are here to help get you support at any point.
- We understand that it can be difficult to stop using cannabis when you are pregnant, especially if you have been using for a long time. This is why it is important that you receive the right support.
- You can refer yourself to drug support services or your Midwife can refer you.
- See contact details depending on what borough you live in below:

Islington: Better Lives	020 3317 6650	nlft.betterlivesreferrals@nhs.net
Haringey: The Grove	020 8702 6220	Beh-tr.thegrovedrugservice@nhs.net
Barnet: Change Grow Live	0300 303 2866	Barnet.info@cgl.org.uk
Enfield: Enable	020 8379 6010	
Camden: Change Grow Live	020 7485 2722	Camden.referrals@cgl.org.uk

If you are unsure what borough you live in, visit the government website:

<https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>



Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or whh-tr.PALS@nhs.net

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please email whh-tr.patient-information@nhs.net. We will try our best to meet your needs.

Whittington Health NHS Trust

Magdala Avenue, London, N19 5NF

Phone: 020 7272 3070

www.whittington.nhs.uk

[x.com/WhitHealth](https://twitter.com/WhitHealth)

facebook.com/WhittingtonHealth

Date published: 20/03/2025

Review date: 20/03/2027

Ref: ACW/Mat/CUIP/02

© Whittington Health NHS Trust

Please recycle.

