

Health Information for Patients Receiving Treatment for Addiction



Allina Health

Substance Abuse and Pregnancy

How alcohol affects babies

Large amounts of alcohol — including beer, wine and wine coolers — clearly harm babies. Even small amounts at critical times in fetal development may be harmful. It is strongly recommended by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), the March of Dimes and the Surgeon General that pregnant women not drink any alcohol.

When you drink alcohol, so too does your developing baby. The alcohol enters your bloodstream and the placenta (the organ attached to your uterus and connected to your baby's umbilical cord). The placenta brings nourishment and oxygen from your blood to your baby. Every time you drink alcohol, your baby drinks alcohol.

During the first 7 weeks of a baby's development, the nervous system, spine, brain and heart all develop. This may be a time you don't realize you're pregnant.

Alcohol can interfere with a baby's development at any time during the pregnancy. Your baby is at risk for developing lifelong mild to severe physical, mental and behavioral birth defects, known as fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS).

Fetal alcohol syndrome is the leading cause of preventable mental retardation and birth defects. It affects about 0.2 to 1.5 of every 1,000 live births. You can prevent FAS by not drinking alcohol during pregnancy. Remember, there is no safe level of alcohol use during pregnancy.

Babies born with fetal alcohol syndrome can develop:

- abnormal facial features:
 - short upturned nose
 - thin upper lip
 - small teeth
 - flat midface
- growth problems
- brain, heart or kidney problems
- mental retardation
- problems with joints
- problems with learning, memory, attention span, communication, vision or hearing
- irritability and hyperactivity
- delayed intellectual development
- poor coordination.

If you are drinking during pregnancy, it is not too late to stop. The sooner you stop, the better it will be for your baby and you. If you need help to stop drinking, or if you are concerned about the amount of alcohol you drank before you knew you were pregnant, talk with your health care provider.

How cigarettes (tobacco) affect babies

Cigarette smoke contains more than 7,000 chemicals, 69 of which are known to cause cancer in people. Smoking puts you at risk for heart, cancer and lung diseases. Smoking puts your baby at risk, too.

Smoking causes less oxygen to get to your baby.
This puts your baby at risk for:

- having a low birth weight (less than 5 ½ pounds).
Low birth weight babies are often sick with many health problems. Small babies are more likely to need special care and stay in the hospital longer. Smoking doubles the chance of a low birth weight baby.
- being born early (premature)
- being born dead (stillborn)
- dying after birth. Low birth weight babies are 40 times more likely to die in the first month than normal weight babies. Babies could die from SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome), also called crib death.

Smoking also affects babies at birth. Breathing smoke causes your baby's tiny airways to get even smaller, making it hard to breathe. Secondhand smoke can increase your baby's risk for respiratory illness such as bronchitis and pneumonia, ear infections and asthma.

To stop smoking, talk with your health care provider.

How illegal (street) drugs affect babies

Illegal (street) drugs cross the placenta and get in your baby's bloodstream. This can cause problems such as low birth weight, developmental problems and the increased risk of death. Using the following drugs can affect your unborn baby.

- **Marijuana** can cause:
 - preterm (early) birth
 - small, sick baby.

Marijuana can also be stored in the body long after use, which means longer exposure for your baby, even if you use the drug every now and then.

In school, children born exposed to marijuana show:

- behavioral problems
- problems with decision-making, memory and the ability to pay attention.

■ **Cocaine** can cause:

- preterm (early) birth
- irritable, fussy baby
- death of an unborn baby (stillbirth).

Cocaine increases the heart rate and decreases oxygen and blood supply in both you and your baby. It can cause significant health problems for the mother, including heart attack.

If you take cocaine close to the baby's birth, your baby may be born unusually active and appear restless. If you use cocaine on a regular basis, your baby will experience withdrawal symptoms after birth.

Into preschool, children born exposed to cocaine show:

- abnormal reflexes
- decreased ability to pay attention and be alert
- decreased motor development
- more restlessness
- short attention span.

■ **Methamphetamines/amphetamines** can cause:

- preterm (early) birth
- irritable, fussy baby
- death of an unborn baby (stillbirth).

These drugs increase the heart rate and decrease oxygen and blood supply in both you and your baby. If you take methamphetamines/amphetamines close to the baby's birth, your baby may be born unusually active and appear restless. If you use these drugs on a regular basis, your baby will experience withdrawal symptoms after birth.

Taking these drugs after birth may affect how well you cope with caring for your baby.

■ **Heroin and opiates** can cause:

- low birth weight
- physical dependence in babies, which can be deadly
- SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome).

If you use these drugs on a regular basis, your baby will experience withdrawal symptoms after birth. Symptoms include: sweating, fever, breathing problems, crying, sucking and irritability.

■ **Inhalants** can cause:

- low birth weight
- physical and developmental problems.

Sniffing chemicals in solvents or aerosol sprays can lead to heart failure and death. There is ongoing research into how abusing inhalants can affect unborn babies.

If you inject (shoot) any illegal drugs into your body, you are at an increased risk for getting HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. Early detection and treatment can reduce your baby's chances of getting HIV to less than 10 percent.

Remember, there is no safe amount of illegal drugs and inhalants. Talk to your health care provider and get help to stop using.

Substance Use Disorders and Diseases

HIV and AIDS

HIV

The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is a virus that attacks the cells in your body that help it fight infection and disease. The virus is mainly found in blood, semen, vaginal secretions and breast milk.

AIDS

HIV weakens your immune system so you can become sick with illnesses that a healthy immune system could fight. If you are infected with HIV, you may develop AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome). This disease occurs when HIV destroys your body's immune system. When your immune system fails you can become very sick and die.

How HIV is spread

Anyone can get HIV. That's why it is important to know how the virus is spread. The virus can be passed from an infected person to an uninfected person:

- during unprotected sex (sex without a latex condom)
- while sharing needles or syringes to inject illegal (street) drugs, or medical equipment used to prepare medicine for injection with a person who has HIV
- by having direct contact with blood or body fluid of an infected person.

HIV can also be passed from a mother to her baby during pregnancy, delivery or breastfeeding.

How HIV is not spread

You cannot get HIV:

- by working with or being around someone who has HIV
- from sweat, spit, tears, clothes, drinking fountains, phones, toilet seats or everyday things like sharing a meal
- from insect bites or stings
- from donating blood
- from a closed-mouth kiss.

How to keep from getting HIV

You can do a lot to protect yourself from getting HIV:

- Don't share needles and syringes to inject drugs, steroids, vitamins, or for tattooing or body piercing. Don't share the equipment used to prepare drugs to be injected.
- Either don't have sex or be involved in a monogamous relationship with an uninfected person. This means neither you nor your partner have sex with anyone else.
- If you are not involved in a monogamous relationship, use male latex condoms properly. The more people you or your partner have sex with, the greater your chances of getting HIV or other diseases through unprotected sex. HIV can be spread from just one act of unprotected sex.
- Don't share razors or toothbrushes.

How to tell if you have HIV

You can be infected and feel healthy. The only way to know if you have HIV is to take a test. You can go to a doctor for a confidential test or buy a home collection kit (available at pharmacies).

- A negative test means there are no HIV antibodies. You are either not infected or you have been recently infected but your body has not made enough antibodies. You may want to be tested again in a few weeks.
- A positive test means you have been infected and your body has made antibodies to fight the infection.

The test results will be part of your medical record. The health care staff involved with your care will have access to your medical record. This information cannot be released to anyone without your written permission or when it is mandated by law.

Positive test results must also be reported to the Minnesota Department of Health, as required by law. These records are kept confidential. If you go to other health care agencies the test result will be given when medically necessary. Any health care workers exposed to your blood or body fluids will be told of the test results.

What to do if you have HIV

If you have HIV, there are treatments that can help you live longer.

- Find a health care provider who knows how to treat HIV. If you cannot find one, talk with a health care provider or trained HIV counselor for a recommendation.
- Follow all of your health care provider's orders and instructions. Be sure to keep all doctor appointments and take any medicines on a regular schedule.
- Get shots (immunizations) to protect yourself against influenza and pneumonia. Your health care provider will give you specific instructions.
- If you smoke or use drugs not prescribed by your health care provider, quit. Your health care provider can help you find a treatment program that will be best for you.

- Eat healthful, well-balanced meals.
- Exercise on a regular basis.
- Get enough sleep and rest.

Whom to call for more information

If you need information on HIV, AIDS, testing, counseling or treatment, call:

- Minnesota AIDS Project AIDSLine: 612-373-2437
- CDC National AIDS Hotline: 1-800-342-2437.

Tuberculosis

Tuberculosis (TB) is caused by a bacteria (mycobacterium tuberculosis). The bacteria (germs) can attack any part of your body, but they usually attack the lungs. TB started to disappear in the U.S. in the 1940s but it has recently made a comeback.

How TB is spread

TB is spread through the air from person to person. The bacteria gets into the air when a person who has TB disease of the lungs or throats sneezes or coughs. When an uninfected person breathes in the germs, the bacteria can settle in the lungs and grow. The bacteria can spread to other parts of the body such as the kidney, spine and brain. This type of TB is usually not spread to others.

Who is at risk for TB

People most at risk for TB are those who spend time every day with an infected person. This includes family members, friends and coworkers. People at increased risk are those who have a weakened immune system and people who have HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

Symptoms of TB

Tuberculosis usually settles in the lungs. This may cause:

- a bad cough that lasts longer than 2 weeks
- chest pain
- coughing up blood or phlegm.

Other symptoms include:

- fatigue or weakness
- weight loss or no appetite
- chills or fever
- night sweats.

What is latent TB infection

Most people who breathe the TB bacteria are able to fight the bacteria. The bacteria are inactive but they stay alive and can become active later in life. This is called latent tuberculosis infection.

If you are infected with latent TB, you:

- do not feel sick
- do not have symptoms
- cannot spread TB to others
- usually have a positive skin test
- have a normal chest X-ray and sputum test
- can develop TB later in life if not treated for latent TB.

Many people who have latent TB do not develop TB disease. People at risk for developing TB disease are those who have a weakened immune system.

How TB is found

There are three types of tests you may receive.

- chest X-ray. If the TB bacteria have affected your lungs, a chest X-ray will show where the infection is located.
- skin test. This is the only way to find out if you have latent TB infection. The health care provider will inject a small amount of testing fluid (tuberculin) under the skin of your arm. Two or 3 days later, the health care provider will measure your reaction to the test.
- sputum test. The health care provider may test some of the phlegm you cough up. He or she will look at it under a microscope to see if there are TB bacteria.

How TB is treated

Tuberculosis can be treated with medicine. The most common types of medicines used to treat TB are isoniazid, rifampin, pyrazinamide, ethambutol and streptomycin.

If you have TB disease, you will need to take several types of medicine. This will help to kill all of the bacteria.

TB medicine is usually safe. Sometimes, the medicine may cause side effects. Please talk with your health care provider about side effects before starting the prescription.

If you have latent TB infection with no symptoms, you can take medicine so you do not develop TB disease.

How to prevent the spread of TB

To prevent the spread of tuberculosis (if you have an infection in the lungs or throat):

- Take your medicine.
- Cover your mouth with a tissue when you cough, sneeze or laugh. Put the tissue in a closed paper sack and throw it away.
- Follow all recommendations your health care provider gives you.

(You cannot get infected with the TB bacteria through shaking hands, sitting on toilet seats or sharing dishes or utensils with an infected person.)

Hepatitis A

Hepatitis A is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis A virus (HAV). The virus is found in the stool of people who are infected with hepatitis A.

Who usually gets hepatitis A

Anyone can get hepatitis A. Proper sanitation, good handwashing and good personal hygiene can help prevent infection. There is a vaccine for hepatitis A. Once you get an infection you cannot get it again.

How hepatitis A can be spread

The infection is spread by:

- putting something in the mouth that had contact with the stool from an infected person
- having sexual contact with an infected person
- living in the same household with an infected person.

Hepatitis A cannot be spread by casual contact such as a hug or handshake.

Who is at risk for hepatitis A

People at risk for hepatitis A are those who:

- share a household or have sexual contact with an infected person
- travel to developing countries that have poor sanitary conditions or where hepatitis A is common
- use illegal (street) drugs

- work in or attend child care centers where a child or employee has hepatitis A
- work or live in institutions for developmentally disabled people where a resident or employee has hepatitis A.

Other people at risk include men who have sex with men, people who work with hepatitis A in a lab or who handle infected animals, and people who have clotting disorders who receive clotting medicines.

Symptoms of hepatitis A

Most adults who have hepatitis A have symptoms that develop over several days. Symptoms include:

- yellow eyes
- dark urine
- tiredness
- appetite loss
- upset stomach (nausea), throwing up (vomiting), fever or stomach ache.

How to treat hepatitis A

No treatment is needed unless nausea and vomiting cause dehydration.

How to prevent the spread of hepatitis A

To prevent the spread of hepatitis A:

- wash your hands with soap and water after using the bathroom, after changing a diaper, and before and after preparing food. Parents should stress proper handwashing habits to their children.
- take precautions when travelling to avoid drinking contaminated water or ice

- avoid raw shellfish that comes from water that has sewage in it
- avoid eating fruits, vegetables or other foods that may have been contaminated during handling.

Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis B virus (HBV). Hepatitis B can cause liver cancer, liver disease and death.

Who usually gets hepatitis B

Anyone can get hepatitis B. There is a vaccine for hepatitis B. Once you get an infection you can carry the virus for the rest of your life.

How hepatitis B can be spread

The infection is spread:

- by having direct contact with blood or body fluids of an infected person
- by having sexual contact with an infected person
- by sharing needles with an infected person
- during childbirth, from a mother to the baby.

People who have long-term (chronic) infection with the virus (known as hepatitis B carriers) never fully recover and can infect other people.

Hepatitis B cannot be spread through food and water or by casual contact such as a hug or handshake.

Who is at risk for hepatitis B

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1 out of 20 people in the U.S. will get infected with the hepatitis virus. People at risk for hepatitis B are those who:

- have sex with an infected person or more than one partner
- share needles when shooting illegal (street) drugs
- live in the same household as a person who has lifelong hepatitis infection
- have a job that involves contact with human blood
- work or live in a home for the developmentally disabled
- have hemophilia (a blood clotting disorder)
- travel to areas of the world where hepatitis B is common.

Other people at risk include men who have sex with men, and people whose parents were born in Southeast Asia, Africa, the Amazon Basin in South America, the Pacific Islands and the Middle East.

Symptoms of hepatitis B

About 30 percent of people do not have symptoms of hepatitis B. Symptoms are more common in adults. Symptoms include:

- yellow eyes (jaundice)
- abdominal or joint pain
- fatigue
- appetite loss
- upset stomach (nausea), throwing up (vomiting), fever or stomach ache.

How to treat hepatitis B

There are medicines that can treat long-lasting hepatitis B infection, but there is no cure.

How to prevent the spread of hepatitis B

To prevent the spread of hepatitis B:

- Get the hepatitis B vaccine.
- Use latex condoms when having sex.
- Pregnant women should get a blood test for hepatitis B.
- Newborns should receive the hepatitis B shot at birth.
- Do not shoot drugs. If you do and can't stop, do not share needles, syringes, water or anything else.
- Do not share personal items that may have blood on them (toothbrushes or razors).
- Do not donate blood, organs or tissue if you have or had hepatitis B.
- Follow routine barrier precautions and safe needle handling (for health care workers).
- Consider the risks of getting tattoos and body piercings. Be sure the artist or piercer uses safe techniques.

Hepatitis C

Hepatitis C is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis C virus (HCV). Hepatitis C can cause liver disease that can lead to the need for a liver transplant.

Who usually gets hepatitis C

Anyone can get hepatitis C. Once you get an infection you can carry the virus for the rest of your life. There is no vaccine for hepatitis C.

How hepatitis C is spread

The infection is spread:

- by having direct contact with blood or body fluids of an infected person
- by receiving blood, blood products or organs from an infected person
- by sharing needles with an infected person such as shooting illegal (street) drugs or getting a tattoo by a tattoo artist who doesn't follow good health practices
- by sharing personal items that may have the infected person's blood on them such as razor or toothbrush
- during childbirth, from a mother to the baby.

Hepatitis C is rarely spread through sexual activity.

Who is at risk for hepatitis C

People at risk for hepatitis C or should be tested are those who:

- share needles when shooting illegal (street) drugs
- were treated for blood clotting problems with a blood product made before 1987
- were notified they received blood from a donor who tested positive for hepatitis C
- received a blood transfusion or solid organ transplant before July 1992
- have contact with human blood (health care workers)
- were born to HCV-positive women.

Hepatitis C cannot be spread by food and water, casual contact such as a hug or handshake, breastfeeding, hugging or kissing, or sharing eating utensils or drinking glasses.

Symptoms of hepatitis C

About 80 percent of people do not have symptoms of hepatitis C. Symptoms include:

- yellow eyes (jaundice)
- dark urine
- abdominal pain
- fatigue
- appetite loss
- upset stomach (nausea).

Many people who have long-term hepatitis C have no symptoms and feel well.

How to treat hepatitis C

Interferon and ribavirin are medicines prescribed to treat hepatitis C. They can be given together or interferon can be used alone. Treatment rates are 40 to 80 percent.

Do not drink alcohol, which can make liver disease worse.

How to prevent the spread of hepatitis C

To prevent the spread of hepatitis C:

- Do not shoot drugs. If you do and can't stop, do not share needles, syringes, water or anything else.
- Do not share personal items that may have blood on them (toothbrushes or razors).
- Follow routine barrier precautions and safe needle handling (for health care workers).
- Consider the risks of getting tattoos and body piercing. Be sure to have either performed by an artist or piercer who follows good health practices.

- Use latex condoms when having sex. (The risk for spreading hepatitis C through sexual contact is rare.)
- Do not donate blood, organs, tissue or sperm if you have or had hepatitis C.

Whom to Call for More Information

- Cambridge Medical Center
Dellwood Recovery
763-688-7723
- New Ulm Medical Center
507-217-5378
- Unity Hospital
763-236-4500

If you are or someone close to you is in crisis, call the free, 24-hour National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255).

Notes:



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