

MERCYs Pregnancy info; information on Pregnancy and Medical Cannabis as well as related issues and items.

Marijuana Myths, Claim No. 7

Visit: http://www.erowid.org/plants/cannabis/cannabis_myth7.shtml

MARIJUANA USE DURING PREGNANCY HARMS THE FETUS

A powerful accusation in anti-drug campaigns is that children are permanently harmed by their mothers' use of drugs during pregnancy. Today, it is commonly claimed that marijuana is a cause of birth defects and development deficits.

THE FACTS

A number of studies claimed reported low birth weight and physical abnormalities among babies exposed to marijuana in utero. ⁴³ However, when other factors known to affect pregnancy outcomes were controlled for - for example, maternal age, socioeconomic class, and alcohol and tobacco use - the association between marijuana use and adverse fetal effects disappeared. ⁴⁴

Numerous other studies have failed to find negative impacts from marijuana exposure. ⁴⁵ However, when negative outcomes are found, they tend to be widely publicized, regardless of the quality of the study.

It is now often claimed that marijuana use during pregnancy causes childhood leukemia. The basis for this claim is one study, in which .5% of the mothers of leukemic children admitted to using marijuana prior to or during pregnancy. A "control group" of mothers with normal children was then created and questioned by telephone about previous drug use. Their reported .5% marijuana use-rate was used to calculate a 10-fold greater risk of leukemia for children born to marijuana users. ⁴⁶ Given national surveys showing marijuana prevalence rates of at least 10%, these "control group" mothers almost certainly under-reported their drug use to strangers on the telephone.

Also used as evidence of marijuana-induced fetal harm are two longitudinal studies, in which the children of marijuana users were examined repeatedly. However, on closer examination, the effects of marijuana appear to be quite minimal, if existent at all.

After finding a slight deficit in visual responsiveness among marijuana-exposed newborns, no differences were found at six months, 12 months, 18 months, or 24 months. ⁴⁷ At age 3, the only difference (after controlling for confounding variables) was that children of "moderate" smokers had superior psycho-motor skills. At age 4, children of "heavy" marijuana users (averaging 18.7 joints/week) had lower scores on one subscale of

one standardized test of verbal development. ⁴⁸ At age 6, these same children scored lower on one computerized task - that measuring "vigilance." On dozens of others scales and subscales, no differences were ever found. ⁴⁹

In another study, standardized IQ tests were administered to marijuana-exposed and unexposed three year-olds. Researchers found no differences in the overall scores. However, by dividing the sample by race, they found - among African-American children only - lower scores on one subscale for those exposed during the first trimester and lower scores on a different subscale for those exposed during the second trimester. ⁵⁰

Although it is sensible to advise pregnant women to abstain from using most drugs - including marijuana - the weight of scientific evidence indicates that marijuana has few adverse consequences for the developing human fetus.

► **Questions about medical marijuana answered by the Institute of Medicine's report "Marijuana and Medicine: Assessing the Science Base"(1999) by the National Academy of Sciences (ISBN 0-309-07155-0). The full report by the National Academy of Sciences can be viewed on-line at <http://books.nap.edu/html/marimed/>**

How bad is it for pregnant women to use marijuana?

"Several studies of women who smoked marijuana regularly during pregnancy show that they tend to give birth to lower weight babies. Mothers who smoke tobacco also give birth to lower weight babies, and the relative contributions of smoking versus THC are not known from these studies. ... Babies born to mothers who smoked marijuana during pregnancy weighed an average of 3.4 ounces less than babies born to a control group of mothers who did not smoke marijuana; there was no statistically significant difference in either gestational age or frequency of congenital abnormalities. ... However, Jamaican women who use marijuana rarely smoke it, but instead prepare it as tea. In a study of neonates born to Jamaican women who did or did not ingest marijuana during pregnancy, there was no difference in neurobehavioral assessments made at three days after birth and at one month." [Pp. 123, 124]

Isn't marijuana too addictive to be used as a medicine?

"Some controlled substances that are approved medications produce dependence after long-term use; this, however, is a normal part of patient management and does not generally present undue risk to the patient." [p. 98]

"Animal research has shown that the potential for cannabinoid dependence exists, and cannabinoid withdrawal symptoms can be observed. However, both appear to be mild compared to dependence and withdrawal seen with other drugs." [p. 35]

"A distinctive marijuana and THC withdrawal syndrome has been identified, but it is mild and subtle compared with the profound physical syndrome of alcohol or heroin withdrawal." [Pp. 89, 90]

Drug Category	Proportion Of Users That Ever Became Dependent (%)
Alcohol	15
Marijuana (including hashish)	9

[p. 95]

"Compared to most other drugs ... dependence among marijuana users is relatively rare." [p. 94]

"Few marijuana users become dependent. ... Dependence appears to be less severe among people who use only marijuana than among those who abuse cocaine or those who abuse marijuana with other drugs (including alcohol)." [Pp. 96, 97]

"In summary, although few marijuana users develop dependence, some do. But they appear to be less likely to do so than users of other drugs (including alcohol and nicotine), and marijuana dependence appears to be less severe than dependence on other drugs." [p. 98]

source: <http://www.mpp.org/science.html>

▶ **"Prenatal Marijuana Exposure and Neonatal Outcomes in Jamaica: An Ethnographic Study"** Melanie C. Dreher, PhD; Kevin Nugent, PhD; and Rebekah Hudgins, MA | **Measurements and main results.** Exposed and nonexposed neonates were compared at 3 days and 1 month old, using the Brazelton Neonatal Assessment Scale, including supplementary items to capture possible subtle effects. There were no significant differences between exposed and nonexposed neonates on day 3. At 1 month, the exposed neonates showed better physiological stability and required less examiner facilitation to reach organized states. The neonates of heavy-marijuana-using mothers had better scores on autonomic stability, quality of alertness, irritability, and self-regulation and were judged to be more rewarding for caregivers.

Pediatrics, February 1994, Volume 93, Number 2, pp. 254-260. American Academy of Pediatrics From the Schools of Nursing, Education, and Public Health, the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Received for publication Sep 21, 1992; accepted Jun 30, 1993. Reprint requests to (M.D.) School of Nursing, the University of Massachusetts, 111 Arnold House, Amherst, MA 01003.

Pediatrics (ISSN 0031 4005). Copyright © 1994 by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Visit: <http://www.druglibrary.org/schaffer/hemp/medical/can-babies.htm>

Info on Pregnancy and Medical Cannabis

► **Marijuana: 1276 user reviews - DailyStrength | (INF) Medically, cannabis is most often used as an appetite stimulant and pain reliever for certain ...**

Pregnancy, Narcolepsy, Obsessive Compulsive Diso. ... I use medical marijuana o... Marijuana (also known as Cannabis) Medically, cannabis is most often used as an appetite stimulant and pain reliever for certain illnesses such as cancer, AIDS and other diseases. It is used to relieve glaucoma and certain neurological illnesses such as epilepsy, migraine and bipolar disorder. It has also been found to relieve nausea for chemotherapy pa... more at Wikipedia

Treatment Success Rates ... Top 5 Communities; Condition, Members, Success - Chronic Pain, 684, 86%; Depression, 55 96%; Bipolar Disorder, 44, 95%; Anxiety, 32 94%; Fibromyalgia, 26, 100%; Overall, 90% (1106 Members) - find Marijuana helpful Visit -

<http://www.dailystrength.org/treatments/Marijuana> - for more.

► **RxMarijuana.com: Index of Medical Conditions | (INF) Marijuana: The Forbidden Medicine. Index of Medical Conditions Addressed We will soon ... MUSCLE SPASM Pregnancy MYOFASCIAL PAIN SYNDROME, NARCOLEPSY ... and more. Visit -**

http://rxmarijuana.com/medical_conditions.htm - for more.

► **Tetrahydrocannabinol - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia | (INF) Tetrahydrocannabinol (/t?tr?hɑ?dr?k?næb?n?l/ tet-r?-hy-dr?-k?-nab-i-nol; THC), also known as delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (?9-THC), ?1-THC (using an older chemical nomenclature), or dronabinol, is the main psychoactive substance found in the cannabis plant. ... Two studies indicate that THC also has an anticholinesterase action[16][17] which may implicate it as a potential treatment for Alzheimer's and Pregnancy. Visit -**

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tetrahydrocannabinol> - for more.

► **New book on women and cannabis** by Pete Brady (17 Mar, 2003) Research shows how **cannabis** benefits women and children ... health as it relates to **breast** feeding. A new book edited by a respected trio of marijuana experts sheds new light on cannabis and women.

Neurologist Ethan Russo, MD (CC#36, [Pot pioneer](#)), Dr. Melanie Dreher, PhD (CC#15, [Dr. Melanie Dreher, reefer researcher](#), and CC#16, [Ganja mothers, ganja babies](#)), and Registered Nurse Mary Lynn Mathre spent several years creating the book "*Women and Cannabis*," which first appeared as an entire issue of the *Journal for Cannabis Therapeutics*.

This groundbreaking volume contains information valuable to anyone who cares about how marijuana affects women. Of particular interest is research by Israeli scientist Ester Frider showing that body-produced substances (called anandamides) that mimic substances found in marijuana are critical to infant health as it relates to breast feeding. Visit: <http://cannabisculture.com/articles/2888.html>

Organizations, Contacts and other Resources

▶ **Medicinal Marijuana Uses | (ORG)** While the prohibition of cannabis is absurd, the ban on the plant's non-psychoactive components is even more mind-boggling & particularly when it's apparent that these compounds possess amazing therapeutic properties ... Sclerosis - Muscle Spasm - Pregnancy - Myofascial Pain Syndrome ... Who approves of Medical Marijuana -. While the prohibition of cannabis is ... to Contact: visit - http://alluseismedicinal.org/Medicinal_Marijuana_Uses.html

▶ **Helping Doctors Helping Marijuana Patients and Caregivers | (ORG)** Legal Users Guide to the Michigan Medical Marijuana Act; a Resource for Legal and Medical Professionals Qualifying Patients and CareGivers ... HELP FOR PHYSICIANS HELP FOR PATIENTS HELP FOR CAREGIVERS HELP FOR LAWYERS LAW & AGENCY RULES FORMS BANK SCHMID LAW Make a General Inquiry: Ask Here ... Menstrual Bleeding), Migraine, general Muscle Spasm, Pregnancy ... to Contact: visit - <http://qualifyingpatient.com/>

▶ **California Cannabis Research Medical Group (CCRMG).** * (ORG, inf) Winter/Spring 2005 - O'Shaughnessy's; Journal of the California Cannabis Research Medical Group. Letter from a Soldier - "Is Cannabis Recommended for Pregnancy?" - "Hello Dr. Mikuriya, I have recently returned home from Iraq. This was my second tour. I only had about 4 months between the two tours. I ... am at a high state of alertness and I startle at certain noises. My tolerance is also very low, I get angry very easily. Not violent, I still have control but very agitated. I also have trouble sleeping and sometimes I have to take a sleeping pill or Nyquil to go to sleep. I went to my doctors and they sent

me to a place on base that helps with Pregnancy.” ... Cannabis would indeed be useful in managing symptoms of Pregnancy. This has been known for over a century in the medical profession but forgotten because of its ... visit: www.ccrmg.org/journal/05spr/opinion.html

▶ **Medical Marijuana ProCon.org | Individual Bio - Al Byrne, Patients Out of Time** ... “Should marijuana be a medical option?” ... International Academy of Cannabis Medicine (IACM), Veteran Outreach -- Cannabis for Pregnancy affected veterans. Visit: www.medicalmarijuanaprocon.org/BiosInd/Byrne.htm

▶ all other Organizations, Non-Profits, NGO's and other such Resources will be listed here as we learn about them. Got one? [Post It!](#) and let everybody know ...

BUSINESSes - Caveat Emptor!

▶ all viable Businesses (For-Profit) and other such Resources will be listed here as we learn about them. Got one? [Post It!](#) and let everybody know ...

FORUMs Section

▶ all viable Forums, Bulletin Boards, Chat rooms and other such online resources will be listed here as we learn about them. Got one? [Post It!](#) and let everybody know ...

NEWS Section

▶ **Article (NEWS) “STUDY FAVOURS POT SMOKING IN PREGNANCY”** by Mark Browne, (Source:Esquimalt News) Regional News - 07 Oct 2005 - British Columbia. “Some people might be shocked at the idea of pregnant women smoking marijuana to deal with the nausea that comes with pregnancy. But a UK-based medical publication, Journal of Complementary Therapies in Clinical Practice, has taken the idea seriously and published a study conducted by the Vancouver Island Compassion Society on the topic.” Visit: Visit: <http://www.esquimaltnews.com/> See also > Vancouver Island Compassion Society (<http://www.mapinc.org/find?235>) < and > Cannabis - Medicinal - Canada (<http://www.mapinc.org/mmjcn.htm>) <

▶ **Article (NEWS) “Pregnancy and Pot; Cannabis can be a special friend to pregnant women in times of need”** by Dr. Kate (01 Sept, 1998). “In the 5 years I have been practising as a midwife, many women have asked my advice on how to have the best

possible pregnancy, labour and birth. Most women know they should avoid drugs in general, as well as additives, chemicals, cleaners, etc. But what about pot? Where does the marijuana herb fit in to pregnancy? Pot can be safely used during pregnancy, and can help with several of the discomforts/problems associated therewith - a fact little known by the medical community, and even much of the herbalist community.” Visit: <http://www.cannabisculture.com/articles/1375.html>

▶ **Article (NEWS) “Cannabis and Pregnancy”** It is concluded, that the use of cannabis is not a major prognostic factor regarding the outcome of pregnancy, but is an indicator of low socioeconomic status and (possible) use of other substances. Visit: <http://www.biopsychiatry.com/canpreg.htm>

▶ **Women, Marijuana, And Pregnancy | (STUDY) Copenhagen University** In two Copenhagen University hospitals 12,885 pregnant women, seen during the period 1/8/1992 to 30/04/1995, answered questionnaires regarding consumption of alcohol, tobacco, cannabis and other drugs. The prevalence of cannabis use was 0.8%. Women using cannabis but no other illicit drugs were each retrospectively matched with four randomly chosen pregnant women in the same period and the same age group and with same parity. Eighty-four cannabis users were included. These women were socio economically disadvantaged and had a higher prevalence of present and past use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. No significant difference in pregnancy, delivery or puerperal outcome was found. Visit: <http://www.a1b2c3.com/drugs/wom05.htm>

Cannabis as Medicine

▶ **RxMarijuana.com | Marijuana: The Forbidden Medicine.** (ORG, inf, Book) Featured Medical Marijuana Patient Accounts * to share website visitors' medical marijuana histories to provide insight into uses for this medicine which are not widely known. ... If you wish to send us a personal account of your medical marijuana experiences, ... Cannabis and Pregnancy by Michael McKenna ... visit: www.rxmarijuana.com/shared.htm

▶ **Medical-101.com** (web-ring / link-list) * Your starting point for the best medical info. Free Medical Cannabis info Find what you're looking for! Visit: www.medical-101.com/s/medical_cannabis

This document was researched, prepared and presented as public service by
MERCY – the Medical Cannabis Resource Center

* 1469 Capital St. NE, #100, Salem, OR 97301 * 503.363-4588 *

visit: **MercyCenters.org**