

Addictions and pregnancy: Preserving your and your baby's health

During pregnancy, the mother is directly linked to her baby and provides all the substances it needs to grow via the blood and the placenta.

Everything the mother eats, drinks or absorbs is therefore, to a certain extent, shared with the baby. That's why it is very important to **eliminate or strictly limit** the use of substances such as **tobacco, alcohol, drugs and medicines**, which harm the baby's development as well as the mother's health^{1,2}.

The consumption of these substances has been linked to several damaging consequences. **Smoking** is a risk factor for **pregnancy complications** and can cause miscarriage, placenta praevia, placental abruption, premature delivery and ectopic, or tubal, pregnancy. Furthermore, intrauterine growth delays and low birth weight have been observed, combined with a higher risk of developing post-natal respiratory conditions¹. **Alcohol** is a **teratogenic** substance which can potentially affect the development of the central nervous system. To date, a consumption threshold that does not alter fetal development has not been determined. The recommendation is therefore to **avoid drinking alcohol, or reduce consumption** to a minimum².

Lastly, the use of **psychoactive substances** such as drugs, antidepressants or psychotropic medications can provoke, in addition to a low birth weight, **risk of malformation, withdrawal and toxicity**. Nevertheless, suddenly ceasing to absorb these substances can be dangerous for the fetus. It is strongly recommended that you consult a healthcare professional to monitor the cessation process¹.

¹ <http://www.respadd.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Guide-complet-BAT2-MD.pdf>

² http://solidarites-sante.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/alcool_et_grossesse_parlons-en2-3.pdf