

# PREGNANCY

## MANAGING YOUR ASTHMA



Asthma can change during pregnancy.  
Do not stop taking your asthma medications.

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Many women find their asthma changes during pregnancy. Whether your asthma is better or worse, good asthma control when you are pregnant is vital for the best possible health for you and your baby.

*Do not stop taking your asthma medications.*

Stopping your medications can put your baby at risk.

Because you are breathing for your baby too, well-controlled asthma means your baby will have a good oxygen supply for normal growth and development, preventing low birth weight and premature delivery.

### ASTHMA MEDICATIONS

Medications for asthma have been shown to be very safe for both mother and baby. It is more dangerous to have untreated asthma during pregnancy than to continue with your prescribed asthma medications. Ask your doctor, pharmacist or asthma & respiratory educator about the role of your medications so you understand how they work and why you should take them.

Ask your doctor for a written asthma action plan with instructions on when and how to use each medication. An asthma action plan also helps you recognise when your asthma is getting worse and tells you what to do in response. Treating a mild symptom flare-up can help prevent it developing into a severe asthma attack.

### BEFORE PREGNANCY

If you are planning a pregnancy, this is a good time to speak with your doctor about your asthma. Together you can make sure your asthma is under the best possible control and that you are on the safest types of medications for you and your baby.

It's also a great time for you and/or your partner to give up smoking. You don't have to do it alone - your doctor, pharmacist or asthma educator can help.

### DURING PREGNANCY

Keep taking all your asthma medications and see your doctor for regular asthma check-ups. Make sure your healthcare team (GP, obstetrician, midwife) know you have asthma and how you manage it. Work with your doctor to develop a personal asthma action plan for during your pregnancy.

Avoid smoking and breathing other people's tobacco smoke. Always act quickly if your asthma symptoms flare up - follow your asthma action plan.

### GIVING BIRTH

Asthma attacks rarely happen during labour. Any symptoms that do occur can usually be managed according to your asthma action plan. Like other women, most women with asthma can expect a normal vaginal delivery.

### AFTER YOUR BABY IS BORN

Keep taking your prescribed asthma medications, even while breastfeeding. Make sure you see your doctor for regular asthma reviews.

If your asthma got worse while you were pregnant, with good management it usually returns to normal within a few months of your baby being born.