

Opioid Use in Pregnancy

Methadone | Morphine | Oxycodone | Codeine | Fentanyl

Planning for Your Hospital Stay



For when you give birth



How does opioid use affect my baby?

In the early days after birth, your baby might show signs of withdrawing from opioids. Some babies will have more signs of withdrawal than others. Babies may feel uncomfortable. They might have trouble eating and sleeping.

While your baby is withdrawing, you can give your baby comforts like skin-to-skin cuddles, love, and attention.



How can I be ready to care for my baby?

Breastfeeding has health benefits for both mothers and babies. Most women who take opioids can breastfeed. If your doctor is prescribing you methadone or suboxone, breastfeeding lessens your baby's signs of withdrawal. However if you take street drugs (like heroin, cocaine), you should not breastfeed.

Please share with your doctor or midwife what substances your baby might get through your breast milk. This helps you and your doctor or midwife decide on a plan to feed your baby safely.

If you are HIV positive or there is a chance you have been exposed to this virus, breastfeeding is not safe for your baby. Talk with your doctor, midwife or, public health nurse about your decision to breastfeed or pump your breast milk.

Skin-to-skin cuddles at birth, and often during the days following birth, give your baby comfort and help to bring in your breast milk.

Think about how breastfeeding and skin-to-skin contact would be for you.

Talk to your doctor or midwife about this. You decide if it is right for you.

Nobody can do it better than mom!

Your baby needs you to help them eat well, sleep well, and be consoled. Being with your baby and responding to their crying right away is the best way to do this.

What will my hospital stay look like?

You might have ideas of what you want during your labour, birth, and after your baby is born. A nurse can help you write your birth plan so the doctors and nurses know what is important to you. Ask your doctor or midwife to refer you to our Seamless Perinatal team for this.

Your baby stays in your room with you unless your baby needs extra monitoring. Babies exposed to opioids usually stay in hospital for at least 5 to 7 days.

Mothers do most of the care for their babies with help from their partner or support person and coaching from your nurse. One support person can stay with you overnight. Your nurse checks in with you and offers support often.



What if my baby needs extra monitoring?

Some babies are cared for in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) because they are born too early or need extra medical care. Babies might go to a children's ward or the NICU if they do not eat well, sleep well, or have trouble being consoled.

These babies stay in hospital longer and we might give medicine to help them eat, sleep, and be consoled.

If your baby goes to the NICU or a children's ward, they still need to be fed, cuddled, and loved by you.

I want more information...where do I go?

We have a booklet, *Caring for Your Baby at Risk of Substance Withdrawal*. You can learn how you can help your baby, how to keep your baby safe, solutions to common concerns, and how your nurses will help during your hospital stay.

Ask your doctor, midwife, or public health nurse for a copy or download a copy by scanning this QR Code.



A QR code (short for 'quick response' code) is a type of barcode that you scan with your smart device's camera. Once scanned, it takes you to that web page.

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This information does not replace the advice given to you by your healthcare provider.

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