

FOR CLINICIANS

## Essential Facts about Smoking Cessation

Tobacco smoking (cigarette smoking in particular) remains the leading preventable cause of death among American women and poses one of the most significant threats to public health in the United States.<sup>1</sup>

“A key strategy to support healthy mothers and healthy babies is to prevent initiation of smoking and promote cessation before, during, and after pregnancy.”<sup>2</sup>

- All women should be screened for any tobacco use and provided with support for smoking cessation. Preconception care recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) stress the importance of pursuing smoking cessation as part of preconception care.
- For women who are not pregnant or breastfeeding, counseling and medications can improve a woman’s chance of quitting.
- Once a woman becomes pregnant, there are fewer medication options and more precautions.
- Certified nurse-midwives (CNMs®) and certified midwives (CMs®) can make a major contribution to the long-term health of women by identifying those who smoke and providing appropriate counseling on smoking cessation.
- Scientific evidence demonstrates that patients who stop tobacco use have substantial overall health benefits, regardless of the number of years of tobacco usage. Smokers lose at least one decade of life expectancy, as compared with those who have never smoked. Cessation before the age of 40 years reduces the risk of death associated with continued smoking by about 90%.<sup>4</sup>
- Tobacco use can impair fertility, delay conception, and increase a women’s risk for ectopic pregnancy.
- Tobacco use increases women’s risk of chronic diseases such as cancer, and cardiovascular and pulmonary diseases.
- Smoking is a significant cause of severe gum disease in the United States. Smokers are three times more likely to have gum disease than nonsmokers. Gum disease can lead to tooth loss.
- Smokers with HIV are more likely to develop the harmful consequences of smoking than smokers without HIV. These illnesses include cancer, heart disease, or stroke. Smokers with HIV are also more likely to develop HIV-related infections than nonsmokers with HIV.<sup>3</sup>

- Secondhand smoke is a mixture of gases and fine particles.<sup>6,7,8</sup> Exposure to secondhand smoke occurs in homes, vehicles, and workplaces, and includes:
  - Smoke from a burning tobacco product such as a cigarette, cigar, or pipe
  - Smoke that has been exhaled or breathed out by the person or people smoking
  - More than 7,000 chemicals, including hundreds that are toxic and about 70 that can cause cancer

Secondhand smoke during pregnancy can cause a baby to be born at low birth weight. Secondhand smoke is also dangerous to young children. Babies exposed to secondhand smoke:

- Are more likely to die from SIDS;
- Are at greater risk for asthma, ear infections, bronchitis, pneumonia and respiratory symptoms;
- May experience slow lung growth.

Eliminating smoking in indoor spaces is the only way to fully protect nonsmokers from secondhand smoke exposure.

- Thirdhand smoke is a relatively new term.<sup>8,9</sup> Thirdhand smoke is generally considered to be residual nicotine and other chemicals left on indoor surfaces by tobacco smoke. The residual nicotine and chemicals may cause devastating health problems for babies and young children, such as asthma and other breathing issues, learning disorders, and cancer.

### Problems with Smoking During Pregnancy<sup>5</sup>

- Maternal smoking during pregnancy increases the risk of ectopic pregnancy, premature rupture of membranes, placental complications of pregnancy, and preterm delivery.
- There are significant fetal and infant risks associated with smoking during pregnancy: preterm delivery, orofacial cleft defects, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).
- Children whose parents smoke are more likely to suffer respiratory illness and otitis media.

When a woman quits smoking, you help protect your infant from the dangers of secondhand smoke and reduce the risk of SIDS.

### Breastfeeding

Smoking is not a contraindication to breastfeeding, and neither smoking nor Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) use should be a reason to discourage breastfeeding.<sup>10</sup>

## References

1. [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/sgr/50th-anniversary/pdfs/what-you-need-to-know.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/50th-anniversary/pdfs/what-you-need-to-know.pdf)
2. <http://www.astho.org/prevention/tobacco/smoking-cessation-pregnancy>
3. [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic\\_information/health\\_effects/pregnancy](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/health_effects/pregnancy)
4. N Engl J Med 2013; 368:341-50.
5. <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/diseases/pregnancy.html>
6. [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/secondhand\\_smoke/general\\_facts](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/secondhand_smoke/general_facts)
7. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2014. [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/sgr/50th-anniversary/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/50th-anniversary/index.htm) [accessed 2014 Apr 11].
8. National Toxicology Program. Report on Carcinogens, Twelfth Edition [PDF–7.22 MB] Research Triangle Park (NC): U.S. Department of Health and Human Sciences, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, National Toxicology Program, 2011. <http://ntp.niehs.nih.gov/pubhealth/roc/index-4.html> [accessed 2014 Apr 11].
9. <http://lungcancer.about.com/od/Lung-Cancer-And-Smoking/a/Third-Hand-Smoke.htm>
10. <http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/faq>

This publication was developed in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of CDC. 101314