

Harm Reduction

If you are drinking alcohol, using cannabis, methamphetamine and/or other substances, and/or inhaling (sniffing, huffing or chroming) drugs or substances, there are several ways to reduce risks while pregnant or feeding breastmilk through something called Harm Reduction. It is very important for your health care provider to know if you are drinking any alcohol or using any substances beyond what has been prescribed. Together you may work towards reducing any potential harms. If you feel you cannot talk about your alcohol or substance use with your current provider, you may need to try to find a different provider.

Please click [here](#) for information on finding a healthcare provider.

There are also ways to reach out and find other people who can support you and discuss harm reduction with you. The resources provided below may give you harm reduction suggestions and help you to keep yourself and the pregnancy as safe as possible.

It may be dangerous to suddenly stop some substances if you have been using them frequently and/or for a long time. If you are pregnant DO NOT stop using suddenly (“cold turkey”) without speaking to a health care provider and/or harm reduction services, as sudden withdrawal may be harmful to you and/or your baby. Harm reduction programs can help you plan a safer way to reduce use. Please see below for Harm Reduction services.

If you have not used in a while, the doses you have used in the past may be too strong and may cause an overdose.

The contamination and strength of the drug supply has become more unpredictable. You may not know what you are buying. Drugs bought from unofficial online sources or from dealers are often contaminated with dirty fillers and/or other substances that may be harmful to you and your baby. They may be stronger than you think, contain other drugs that you did not expect, or come from a very dirty batch. Each of these have resulted in frequent overdoses (ODs) and have made people very sick. If you have access to drug testing in your community it can be helpful to check what has been showing up in latest products. To do so you can contact a Drug Checking Service. To find a service please click here [Supervised consumption sites and services](#)

If you are using, it is safest to do so at a supervised consumption site (some of them also include safe inhalation sites) to minimize the risks. If you are not able to go to a safe consumption site, have a safe buddy. If you are injecting, using at a supervised consumption site will lower your risk for infection. If you are interested, they can also provide you with information on safer injection, how to prevent and what to do in case of overdose, medical and counselling services, and referrals to housing, income support, drug treatment, and other services.

For locations in Canada please see:

[Supervised consumption sites](#)

For locations in Ontario please see:

[Toronto Supervised Consumption Services](#)

Drugs and medications may pass into breastmilk in different amounts, and some may affect your baby.

Using drugs may reduce your attention and awareness. It may affect how you and your child connect and your ability to take care of your child's needs.

Drugs or medications, including prescription and over-the-counter, can seriously hurt or kill a child or baby. Keep medications in child-proof containers, in a secure area and out of reach. For more information please see [Ontario Poison Centre - Poison Prevention](#).

Using drugs beyond what your clinician prescribes during pregnancy or parenting in a way that harms you or your baby may result in a community member or care provider contacting child protective services.

Urine drug testing is a screening test that can give a false positive result from other medications that a person may be taking. It is important to provide a list of all medications (prescription, over-the-counter) that you are taking if you having drug screening testing.

There are different Harm Reduction approaches and services available. For more information, please see:



For Canada:

[Get Help with Substance Use](#)

For Ontario:

[ConnexOntario- Discover Mental Health, Addiction and Problematic Gambling Services](#)
[Harm Reduction Network - Connections for People Who Use Drugs](#)

For Toronto:

[Services Provided by The Works](#)