

# SUBSTANCE USE

## AND ITS EFFECTS ON YOUR BABY



### NEONATAL ABSTINENCE SYNDROME

If you use substances during pregnancy, they can pass through the placenta to the baby. The placenta grows in the uterus and provides food and oxygen for your baby through the umbilical cord. When opiates are used during pregnancy, babies are either premature or born too small or can be diagnosed with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS).

NAS is a group of problems for newborns exposed to addictive, illicit or prescription drugs while in the womb. Babies could potentially become addicted to these drugs and go through withdrawal symptoms after birth.

Typical symptoms of NAS include being born smaller than 5 lbs, 8 oz. breathing/feeding problems, stomach problems (cramps and vomiting), rapid heart rate, spots of color on the skin (reddened fingertips, toes and knees) slower brain activity, agitation, tremors, high pitched crying and possibly tense muscles.

### TREATMENT & PREVENTION



The infant will spend approximately 2 weeks in the hospital. During this time, liquid painkillers (oral opiates) are used in moderation AND under physician supervision to manage NAS. This process is called medication assisted treatment (MAT program). Specific medications could vary based on the severity of the case. Most often methadone and morphine are used to treat NAS.

The most effective way to prevent NAS is to stop the use of illicit substances and/or misusing prescription drugs before you become pregnant. If you are pregnant and using substances, talk to your doctor, nurse or healthcare provider IMMEDIATELY. Do NOT stop taking drugs WITHOUT getting treatment from your provider. This could cause a severe case of withdrawal for you and the baby.



### Statistics

- 60-80% of infants exposed to opiates in the womb develop NAS
- 7/1000 newborns diagnosed with NAS (CDC, 2018)
- 1 baby every 19 minutes diagnosed with NAS (CDC, 2018)
- 80 newborns diagnosed every day (CDC, 2018)
- # of babies diagnosed with NAS increased by 82% from 2010 to 2017 (CDC, 2018)
- The cost of a hospital stay for a baby with NAS is nearly 8x greater (\$1,100- \$8,000) (CDC, 2018)
- Average length of stay for newborn with NAS was 11 days compared to 2 days for other newborns (CDC, 2018).

**For more information visit:**

[www.emory.edu/msacd](http://www.emory.edu/msacd) | [www.stoprxabuseingeorgia.org](http://www.stoprxabuseingeorgia.org)

