

[IMAGE]

Smoking, Pregnancy Just Don't Mix

If the overwhelming evidence linking cigarette smoking to poor health hasn't convinced you to quit, perhaps recent research may help you consider the health of your child before taking a smoke during pregnancy.

Consider a study that appeared in the October 1999 issue of *Pediatrics* (www.pediatrics.org).

Researchers utilized four questionnaires (two administered to the mothers of 1,974 children at 16 weeks' gestation, a third at 30 weeks, and the fourth at eight months postpartum) to gather data on the potential relationship between maternal smoking and hospitalization of the child during the first months of life.

Children whose mothers smoked 15 or more cigarettes per day (about 3/4ths of a pack) during pregnancy were twice as likely to be hospitalized during their first eight months of life, compared with children whose mothers refrained from smoking during pregnancy. Common reasons for hospitalization included respiratory, gastrointestinal and skin problems, and this risk associated with smoking was independent of the father's smoking habits or the child's gender.

Over the past two years, we've reported the results of numerous studies on the detrimental effects of smoking. If you're a former smoker who's managed to quit, or if you've always been a nonsmoker, bravo! You'll be healthier for it. If you're a current smoker who'd like to quit but can't seem to break the habit, your doctor can give you information on the most effective method for you.

Reference:

Wisborg K, Henriksen TB, Obel C, et al. Smoking during pregnancy and hospitalization of the child. *Pediatrics* (online version), Oct. 1999: Vol. 104, No. 4, ppe46.

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http://www.toyourhealth.com/mpacms/tyh/article.php?id=555&no_paginate=true&no_b=true