

## Marijuana use during pregnancy increases infant's chances of getting autism by 50%

[C]hildren of mothers who reported using cannabis during pregnancy had a 50% increased risk of developing autism spectrum disorder (ASD), compared with children who weren't exposed to cannabis in utero, even after controlling for confounding factors.

The [new results](#) highlight that women who are thinking of using cannabis during pregnancy should be aware of the potential risks of the drug, and talk to a healthcare provider. "In the past, we haven't had good data on the effect of cannabis on pregnancies," said Daniel Corsi, PhD, epidemiologist at the Ottawa Hospital and BORN Ontario, which is affiliated with the CHEO Research Institute. "This is one of the largest studies on this topic to date. We hope our findings will help women and their health-care providers make informed decisions."

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Recreational use of cannabis is now legalized in Canada, and expectant parents may think that cannabis can be used to treat morning sickness. However, legalization of cannabis doesn't mean it's safe for people who are pregnant or breastfeeding.

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Cannabinoids, including tetrahydrocannabinol in cannabis, readily cross the placenta and can enter the fetal bloodstream, the authors commented. Human and animal studies suggest that disruption of endocannabinoid signaling may interfere with normal neuronal wiring, and this could have implications for fetal neurodevelopment.

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