

# A r k a n s a s

# PRAMS

Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System

# Report



## Smoking Before, During and After Pregnancy in Arkansas: PRAMS, 2009 – 2011

Do you smoke? Are you thinking about having children someday? Now is the time to quit smoking. It is easier to quit smoking before you have children, or before you have your next child, than to quit smoking during pregnancy.

Smoking during pregnancy is a leading cause of death for unborn and newborn babies. It is one of the most preventable causes of health problems for mothers, unborn babies, infants, and children. The U.S. Public Health Services has estimated that if all pregnant women quit smoking, the number of still births would be reduced by 11% and the number of newborn deaths would be reduced by 5%.

In the years 2009-2011, 1.4% of the babies born to Arkansas mothers who smoked died within the first six months of life, but only 0.4% of the babies born to Arkansas mothers who did not smoke died. So, for Arkansas mothers who smoked during their pregnancy, they were almost 4 times more likely to have a baby die than mothers who did not smoke at all.

Smoking also drastically increases the chances that a woman will have a baby that weighs less than 5 ½ pounds (called a 'low birthweight' baby). Many women believe having a smaller baby is better because they are easier to deliver and does not harm the baby. This is not true. The March of Dimes tells us that newborn babies that weight less than 5 ½ pounds are more likely to have serious health problems all through life.

Babies born to women who smoke during pregnancy are:

- more likely to have problems with their lungs, heart, brain, intestines, and eyes.
- at a greater chance for problems such as birth defects like cleft palates.
- more likely to die from sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS or crib death), the leading cause of death for infants ages 1 to 12 months.
- also more likely to have health and learning problems as children.
- more likely to have high blood pressure, diabetes, and heart disease as adults.

In Arkansas, 11% of the women who smoked during the last 3 months of pregnancy had babies that weighed less than 5 ½ pounds, but only 7% of women who did not smoke had small babies. If you do not smoke during pregnancy, you will increase your chances of having a healthier baby who stays healthier growing up.

### What moms said about smoking:

“My baby boy was three pounds and twelve ounces. They said because I smoked cigarettes, which is true.”

“I think that drs. & nurses should not just hand a brochure or pamphlet on why to not smoke, drink, or do drugs when they are pregnant. I have heard to many mothers to be tell others they smoke b/c everyone tells them their babies were fine and that marijuana doesn't hurt a baby.”

“I have argued with grandma about the possible health problems from smoking in her home around the baby. When i am present she and the 3 other smokers in the house smoke in a seperate room and have the front door cracked open to let the smoke go out. I am still very uncomfortable with this...”

Some women in Arkansas may be under the impression that using e-cigarettes or vaping devices during pregnancy is safe for the mother and her unborn child. This has not been proven to be true. There are now data that e-cigarettes release many of the same harmful ingredients as regular cigarettes including nicotine, cancer causing compounds, and other toxins like formaldehyde.<sup>5</sup> “To protect you and your baby, and until such time when science proves that it is safe, it is recommended that pregnant women not use e-cigarettes or vaping devices.”

### Smoking after pregnancy

Babies and children who grow up around people who smoke are more likely to have asthma, colds, bronchitis, or pneumonia. They are also more likely to have many ear infections, which can cause problems with speech and language development. They are also more likely to die from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), also known as crib death.

### Women who smoke

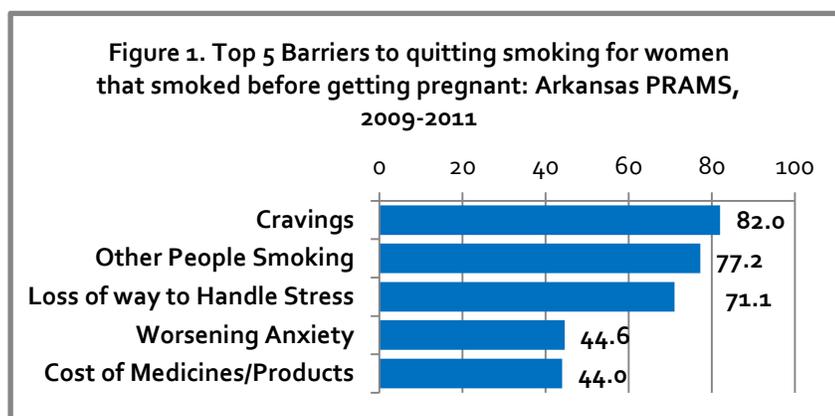
Cigarette smoking increases the risk of having problems such as placenta previa (low-lying placenta that covers all or part of the opening of the womb) and placental abruption (placenta pulls away from the womb wall).

### What makes it difficult to quit smoking?

Many women believe that it is too hard to quit smoking while pregnant, but it is harder to quit after having your baby. When the baby is born, the mother is getting used to many changes that can be very stressful. When taking the PRAMS survey, the women who smoked the last three months of pregnancy reported higher scores of depression, hopelessness, and feeling like they were slowed down after having their baby than the women who did not smoke while pregnant.

The PRAMS survey asked women to choose their reasons that they did not quit smoking. They could select as many as they wanted. The graph at the right shows their answers.

Some women believe they would gain more weight if they quit smoking. Gaining weight during pregnancy is healthy and necessary. You can stay at a healthy weight before, during, and after pregnancy by eating healthy, being physically active, and quitting smoking.



Another myth is that the classes to help you quit smoking cost money. One out of every three women that took the PRAMS survey listed that the cost of classes was a reason that they could not quit smoking. In Arkansas, all of the classes that help you stop smoking are free.

Free help and support are available for pregnant women and others who want to quit for good.

- For free help, call the Arkansas quitline. Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669).
- Find tips on quitting smoking, visit <http://www.smokefree.gov/>
- Learn quitting tips from [http://www.marchofdimes.com/pregnancy/alcohol\\_smoking.html](http://www.marchofdimes.com/pregnancy/alcohol_smoking.html)

### References

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