

PREGNANCY AND OPIOID USE



American Medical Women's Association



- The number of women with opioid-related diagnoses documented at delivery increased by 131% from 2010 to 2017
- A condition called **Neonatal Opioid Withdrawal Syndrome (NOWS)** may be present in infants who are born to mothers with substance or medication use during pregnancy

Signs/symptoms of NOWS may be present from birth-5 days of life and may include:

- Increased sneezing and yawning
- Vomiting and diarrhea
- Shaking
- Diaper rash
- High-pitched crying
- Constant desire to suck
- Decreased sleeping
- Poor weight gain
- Seizures
- Fever

What to expect

During Pregnancy

- It is best to discuss any substance or medication use, including opioids, cigarettes, alcohol, stimulants, sedatives, and antidepressants with your doctor so that both you and your baby can be treated in the safest way possible
- Don't stop taking any opioids without first talking to your provider
- Opioid users are encouraged to switch to methadone or buprenorphine and may be weaned to lowest dose possible by your provider

During Delivery

- Your doctor will provide adequate pain control while avoiding overmedication

After delivery

- It is likely you both will have your urine tested for the most common legal/illegal substances
- Your baby will have his/her first poop collected and tested
- You may be provided with education and counseling to prevent relapse
- Your baby will be watched for signs of withdrawal
- You will receive instructions on basic newborn care
- While each state law is different, a report will be made to your local department of family services

Treatment for NOWS

- Keeping the baby in the room with you
- Swaddling, soothing music, gentle rocking
- Small frequent feedings
- Breastfeeding is allowed if you have been enrolled in a program and are compliant for the 3 months prior to delivery
- After non-medication treatments are tried, babies with NOWS may need medication such as Morphine, Methadone, Clonidine, or Phenobarbital to control the withdrawals

