



Tobacco During Pregnancy: Smoking VS the Use of Nicotine Replacement Therapy During Pregnancy

NRT (nicotine replacement therapy) is a safer option for mother and unborn child than continued smoking during pregnancy. The Eastern Ontario Health Unit and the OMA (Ontario Medical Association) recommend NRT. Studies have shown that there is less damage and/or danger to the fetus due to the absence of toxins produced by the burning cigarette. Inhaling during smoking delivers over 4000 toxic chemicals to the fetus, passed on by the mother's blood stream. Included in the toxins are carbon monoxide, lead, formaldehyde, ammonia and arsenic. One of the most toxic is carbon monoxide, as it limits oxygen intake as well as essential nutrients to the fetus. In

addition, studies have also shown that the acute effects of NRT in pregnant women indicate that nicotine alone has minimal effect on the maternal and fetal cardiovascular system.

There are several different types of nicotine replacement therapy to help pregnant smokers quit: an adhesive patch, nicotine gum, and nicotine inhaler. Obviously, the most important gift to give your unborn child is to quit smoking completely. NRT is the second best alternative. If you are interested in quitting smoking or want more information, speak with your family doctor or local pharmacist.

Facts:

- Approximately 9600 infant deaths occur each year in the U.S. as a result of smoking during pregnancy.
- There are approximately 4000 chemicals (some of which are well documented toxins) that are inhaled while smoking.
- Effects of smoking on the fetus: miscarriages; stillbirths; premature rupture of membranes; premature labor and delivery; hypertension; fetal toxicity; growth retardation;
- Post natal outcomes: Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS); high blood pressure during infancy; behavioral, psychiatric and cognitive outcomes of childhood; asthma; pneumonia and other respiratory illnesses.



**For more information, please contact the Eastern Ontario Health Unit
at 933-1375 or at 1 800 267-7120, and ask for Health Line.
Visit our Web site at www.eohu-bseo.on.ca.**

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□ Head Office/Siège social
1000, rue Pitt Street
CORNWALL, ON K6J 5T1
Tel./tél.: (613) 933-1375
or/ou 1 800 267-7120
Fax/télécopieur: (613) 933-7930

□ 60, rue Anik Street, Unit/Unité # 2
ALEXANDRIA, ON K0C 1A0
Tel./tél.: (613) 525-1112
Fax/télécopieur: (613) 525-2603

□ 787, rue Principale Street
P.O. Box/C.P. 338
CASSELMAN, ON K0A 1M0
Tel./tél.: (613) 764-2841
or/ou 1 800 267-8260
Fax/télécopieur: (613) 764-0264

□ 134, Main St. East/rue Main Est
Suite/Bureau 301
HAWKESBURY, ON K6A 1A3
Tel./tél.: (613) 632-4355
or/ou 1 800 565-2314
Fax/télécopieur: (613) 632-4171

□ 2884, rue Chamberland Street
Unit 2, 2^e Floor/Unité 2, à l'étage
ROCKLAND, ON K4K 1M6
Tel./tél.: (613) 446-1400
Fax/télécopieur: (613) 446-1454

□ 457, Main St. East/rue Main Est
P.O. Box/C.P. 616
WINCHESTER, ON K0C 2K0
Tel./tél.: (613) 774-2739
Fax/télécopieur: (613) 774-4079