

A communication periodical for our clients, staff & the community at large

# The Chronicle

A Paterson Counseling Center Newsletter

## Prescription Drugs and Pregnancy

Any woman who becomes pregnant needs to evaluate her lifestyle and, if necessary, make changes to protect the health of her baby. If you have a problem with dependence on or with abuse of prescription drugs, it is important that you seek help not only for the sake of your own health but also for the sake of the health of your baby.



Commonly Abused Prescription Drugs:

### Opioids:

These drugs are prescribed to treat pain and are sometimes used as a pre-anesthetic sedative. Common names include morphine, codeine, hydrocodone (Vicodin), meperidine (Demerol) and oxycodone (OxyContin, Percocet).

### CNS Depressants:

These drugs are prescribed to treat anxiety and sleep disorders. CNS depressants are divided into two categories, barbiturates and benzodiazepines. Common prescription names include mephobarbital (Mebaral), pentobarbital sodium (Nembutal), alprazolam (Xanax), diazepam (Valium), lorazepam (Ativan) and chlordiazepoxide HCl (Librium).

### Stimulants:

These drugs are prescribed to treat narcolepsy and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Common prescription names include dextroamphetamine (Dexedrine or Adderall) and methylphenidate (Ritalin).

Popular Drugs That Can Be Harmful to Your Baby:

Morphine and Demerol are labeled Category C for safety in pregnancy; they are used to relieve severe to moderate pain. Tylenol with Codeine is labeled Category C for safety in pregnancy; it is usually used for mild to moderately severe pain.

Xanax is labeled Category D for safety in pregnancy; it is used to treat anxiety and panic disorders.

Valium is labeled not for use in pregnancy; it is used to treat anxiety disorders and alcohol withdrawal.

#### This Issue:

Page 1  
Rx Drugs &  
Pregnancy

Page 2  
Rx Drugs &  
Pregnancy Con-  
tinued

# Prescription Drugs and Pregnancy (cont)

Ritalin is labeled Category C for safety in pregnancy; it is used to treat attention-deficit hyperactive disorder.

Oxycontin is labeled Category B for safety in pregnancy; it is used to relieve moderate to severe pain for an extended amount of time. It is important to let your health care provider know about any drugs that you are taking.



How can prescription drugs harm my baby?

Everything that a pregnant woman ingests has the potential to affect her baby in either a positive or negative way. Oxygen and nutrients that are positive reach the fetus by crossing the placenta. Any drugs taken by a pregnant woman will also cross the placenta to reach her baby. The effects of any drug on the developing fetus are largely dependent upon the stage of a woman's pregnancy. Prescription drugs can cause the following problems and complications during pregnancy:

- Contraction of the uterus which can affect the blood supply to the baby or cause preterm labor and birth
- Interference with normal prenatal development that can lead to birth defects or fetal demise

Interference with the function of the placenta which supplies oxygen and nutrients to the baby causing some babies to be underdeveloped and underweight

How would I know if I am abusing prescription drugs?

- You consume larger doses than prescribed.
- You use them more frequently than prescribed.
- You take the medication for reasons other than originally prescribed.
- You take medication prescribed for someone else

You use medication with alcohol, narcotics or other addictive substances.

What should I do if I am pregnant and abusing prescription drugs?

The most difficult step is admitting that you have a problem. When you become pregnant your lifestyle habits will need to change for the sake of both yourself and your baby.

At your first prenatal visit, your health care provider will ask you a series of questions about your lifestyle. He/she will ask if you smoke, drink, and/or are taking any prescription drugs. Be completely open and honest with your health care provider.

Source: <http://americanpregnancy.org>