

# Perinatal Substance Use

## 5 ways you can improve care during pregnancy and beyond

Pregnancy presents unique opportunities for patients to make positive changes in their substance use. When you become an informed provider you empower patients to make those changes.



### Educate Yourself

Learn more about the pharmacology of substance use. Promote evidence-based care by communicating with patients in a way that separates fact from fiction. Understand the cycles of sobriety and relapse so that you can help patients plan for their recovery. Advise on the risks associated with polysubstance use.



### Use the Right Words

Know the difference between substance use, substance misuse, and Substance Use Disorders (SUDs). Recognize that substance use is stigmatized and that stigma is a barrier to seeking care. Reject language that shames. Embrace the principles of Harm Reduction as a way to support any positive change.



### Screen Every Patient

Talking about substance use should be a routine part of everyone's medical care. Get comfortable discussing it. Ask questions and listen to what your patients have to say. You may be the first person to ever ask.



### Get Trained to Offer MAT

Medication Assisted Treatment is the Standard of Care during pregnancy, but there are not enough providers. Contact SAMHSA to become an OTP\*. Make naloxone available to all your patients who use opioids.

\*opioid treatment program



### End the Stigma and Criminalization of Drug Use

Embrace people who use substances. Meet them where they are. Abide by your medical ethics. Practice beneficence. Promote public health. Advocate for decriminalization.

## Your Advocacy Matters



Academy of Perinatal  
Harm Reduction

[www.perinatalharmreduction.org](http://www.perinatalharmreduction.org)



National  
Perinatal  
Association

[www.nationalperinatal.org](http://www.nationalperinatal.org)

# Perinatal Substance Use

## 5 ways you can improve care during pregnancy and beyond

Pregnancy presents unique opportunities for patients to make positive changes in their substance use. When you become an informed provider you empower patients to make those changes.



### Educate Yourself

Learn more about the pharmacology of substance use. Promote evidence-based care by communicating with patients in a way that separates fact from fiction. Understand the cycles of sobriety and relapse so that you can help patients plan for their recovery. Advise on the risks associated with polysubstance use.



### Use the Right Words

Know the difference between substance use, substance misuse, and Substance Use Disorders (SUDs). Recognize that substance use is stigmatized and that stigma is a barrier to seeking care. Reject language that shames. Embrace the principles of Harm Reduction as a way to support any positive change.



### Screen Every Patient

Talking about substance use should be a routine part of everyone's medical care. Get comfortable discussing it. Ask questions and listen to what your patients have to say. You may be the first person to ever ask.



### Get Trained to Offer OAT

Opioid Agonist Therapy (OAT) is the Standard of Care during pregnancy, but there are not enough providers. Contact SAMHSA to become an OTP\*. Make naloxone available to all your patients who use opioids.

\*opioid treatment program



### End the Stigma and Criminalization of Drug Use

Embrace people who use substances. Meet them where they are. Abide by your medical ethics. Practice beneficence. Promote public health. Advocate for decriminalization.

## Your Advocacy Matters



Academy of Perinatal  
Harm Reduction

[www.perinatalharmreduction.org](http://www.perinatalharmreduction.org)



National  
Perinatal  
Association

[www.nationalperinatal.org](http://www.nationalperinatal.org)