



# Young, Pregnant & In Control

## Making Healthy Choices for You and Your Baby

A PAD youth resource

This brochure is written for pregnant and parenting young women in the 14 – 19 age range. This pamphlet gives young pregnant and parenting women straight facts to empower them make decisions about alcohol and other drug use that are in their own and their baby's best interest.

### When you're young and pregnant, it can feel like the whole world is against you

If you've ever felt looked down on for being young and pregnant, you're not imagining it, and you're definitely not alone. People jump to negative conclusions about young pregnant women all the time. If you're a woman of colour, Aboriginal, or poor... it can be even worse.

Suddenly, everyone seems to feel like they have the right to tell you what to do, and the information you're getting can be confusing. That's especially true when it comes to drug use—whether we're talking about alcohol, street drugs or even stuff you can buy over-the-counter at the pharmacy. **Are you going to let people's assumptions bring you down, or are you going to get the facts and make your own choices?**

### Drugs and alcohol can seem like a way to cope.

Research shows that the main reasons girls use drugs and alcohol are to help them relax, to improve their moods, to feel better about themselves, to lose weight and to fit in with their friends. When you're young, pregnant, and constantly being made to feel like you've done something wrong, you might want those things more than ever. At the same time, you want what's best for your baby. That's why it's important to get the facts. **The more you know, the more you can take control.**

### Pregnancy & Drinking:

You've probably heard different things when it comes to alcohol and pregnancy. Some pregnant women won't take a single sip; others think a drink every now and then won't hurt. So, what's the truth? Research has shown that Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) – a disorder that includes mental and physical problems in children – is associated with drinking in pregnancy. And research has not yet been able to determine how much – or how little – alcohol will cause the disorder. **Can you drink occasionally during pregnancy? Most doctors say it's safest not to.**

## Pregnancy & Marijuana:

Pregnant women use marijuana more than any other street drug, but is it safe? Just like with alcohol, researchers have not yet determined how much marijuana it takes to harm a developing baby, but it's been proven that using a lot of marijuana during pregnancy can cause problems. These problems can include hyperactivity, depression, anxiety, and memory issues and usually don't develop until the child is three or older. **Using marijuana while pregnant can have long-term effects on your child.**

## Pregnancy & Prescription Drugs:

Most people know there are dangers in using illegal drugs and alcohol in pregnancy, but they often don't realize that prescription drugs (like Percocet® and Tylenol® 3) can be a problem too — especially if they weren't prescribed by your doctor.

Girls sometimes take these drugs because, besides reducing pain, they make you feel relaxed and happy. But if you mix them with other drugs (like alcohol), or take a lot of them, they can make you extremely sleepy, slow your breathing or even cause an overdose. Using or abusing prescription drugs for a long time can also make you dependent on them, and certain prescription drugs are known to harm developing babies. Even some over-the-counter drugs, like some cold medicines and sleeping pills, aren't recommended for pregnant women. **When you're pregnant, it's a good idea to check with a health professional before you take any kind of drug.**

## Your Body, Your Baby, Your Decision...

Being pregnant is a huge responsibility for anyone. Every decision you make affects your baby, and it's not always easy to weigh the risks. Add to that the fact that everyone's telling you different things, and that people are way too quick to judge, and it can be hard to know what to do or where to turn. At the end of the day, though, it's your body... and your baby... and your decision. That's why it's so important to make sure you've got the most up-to-date information. If you didn't find the answers you were looking for in this brochure, keep asking questions! You can talk to your doctor, a pharmacist, or try one of the resources listed on the next page. **The more you know, the more you'll have the control and confidence you need to make the best life for yourself and your baby.**

## Young Moms Are Moving Forward!

We work hard.  
We're juggling school, and work, and so much more.  
We aren't afraid to ask for help.  
We're scared, but doing our best.  
We're moving up; making a good life for ourselves  
We love our kids. We'd do anything for them.