

BABY DRUG HARM

A new scientific study into the harm to unborn babies of a mother's use of illicit drugs shows that the harm to the baby extends into adulthood.

Cannabis, cocaine, methamphetamines, heroin and opiates were found to affect the developing baby's central nervous system.

Illicit drugs taken by the mother enter the baby's blood stream and interfere with its brain development and restrict the baby's oxygen supply.

At age 10, children that had been exposed to prenatal cannabis use reported more depressive symptoms than did others with no exposure.

As well as the harm of illicit drugs to babies, other harms may be caused by the mother's bad diet, stress, violence and disregard for personal care.

(Source: Addiction Science & Clinical Practice journal, July 2011)

DRUG ADVISORY COUNCIL COMMENTS

Drug using pregnant women need special assistance to reduce the harm of drug use with abstinence support, mental health screening and parental skills training.

Children exposed to illicit drug use in the womb need specific individual therapy and ongoing cognitive and behavioral assessment.

Preventative programs that get women of childbearing age off drugs are best practice to prevent the many harms of drug use.

Rather than deal with brain damage of the mothers and their babies after the damage, it is better that the damage is prevented from occurring in the first place.

Identified illicit drug using women of childbearing age need to be diverted into rehabilitation as early intervention prevention.

**THE DRUG ADVISORY COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA SUPPORTS-
More detoxification & rehabilitation that gets illicit drug user's drug free.
Court ordered and supervised detoxification & rehabilitation.
Less illicit drug users, drug pushers and drug related crimes.**