



REGULAR RECREATIONAL USE OF MARIJUANA REDUCES FERTILITY

Don't let marijuana dependence get in the way of your successful fertility journey. Listen to the experts.

Let's face it: You're not likely thinking about your fertility when you're using marijuana. In fact, marijuana's healing effects have been touted so much that it's hard for many to believe it has any negative impact on your health at all. But research shows that long-term marijuana use can affect your ability to conceive. Over the last few years marijuana has become more readily available across the United States and, as a result, use has become more widespread. As with any substance, it's important to avoid becoming dependent on marijuana, especially if you're trying to conceive.

Here, experts weigh in on the link between marijuana use and fertility difficulties.

Marijuana interferes with reproductive success.

"Marijuana can lower fertility, reducing the potential to conceive. There exists a complex relationship between the endocannabinoid system and sex hormones. The sex hormones and our own endocannabinoids up and down regulate each other throughout the menstrual cycle to facilitate reproductive success. Anything interfering with that complex feedback system will negatively impact fertility. Marijuana lowers testosterone in males and lowers both testosterone and estrogen in females ... which is not conducive to feeling strong and sexy. It tends to lower libido, which would also not improve the outcome! Conception requires sexual activity." *Felice Gersh, MD, OB/GYN, founder/director of the Integrative Medical Group of Irvine*

Marijuana use reduces your sperm count or delays ovulation.

"Currently, the body of evidence shows that women who use cannabis in pregnancy are at increased risk of having a low birthweight infant, of delivering pre-term and of stillbirth. Overall, men's use of cannabis once a week or more was linked to a 29% reduction in total sperm count, and women's use within the past three months was tied to delayed ovulation. Also, evidence also supports that erectile dysfunction is twice as high in cannabis users compared to non-users." *Mark P. Trolice, MD, board-certified OB/GYN and REI*

Recent research shows marijuana increases your risk of miscarriage.

"It has long been known that cigarette smoking is associated with both male and female infertility. Many have extrapolated these findings to include marijuana smoking despite the dearth of data supporting or negating these findings. Recent research has shown that there is no statistically significant impact of marijuana use on the time to pregnancy. With that said, recently presented research at this past October's Scientific Congress of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine, reported that smoking marijuana more than one a week was associated with an increase in miscarriage. As the legal landscape continues to change, more research is needed with respect to the mode of ingestion, frequency of utilization, and length of use." *Brian A. Levine, MD, founding partner and practice director of CCRM New York.*