Cocaine and pregnancy

Cocaine
C - Charlie - Coke - Percy – Snow – White – Toot

Crack cocaine
Base - Pebbles - Rock - Stone – Wash

However you refer to cocaine, using in pregnancy can cause serious problems for both you and your baby.

Cocaine is extremely addictive and you may find it very difficult to stop using. It is important that you are honest with your midwife and let her know if you are currently using or have used cocaine at all during your pregnancy.

If you have used, or continue to use cocaine your midwife will refer you to an obstetric consultant who will closely monitor you and your baby. Your midwife is also able to help you access services to help you stop using and offer support.

Risks for babies
When you are pregnant cocaine quickly crosses the placenta and therefore affects the baby.

Cocaine use is linked with the following:

- Placental abruption – when the placenta suddenly becomes detached from the womb – this can be fatal for babies
- Prematurity (giving birth before your baby is due)
- Stillbirth
- Poor growth in the womb
- Abnormal brain and central nervous system development
- Limb deformities – particularly if you mix cocaine and alcohol

Babies whose mothers use cocaine often find feeding difficult. They are often irritable and may have to stay in hospital for up to ten days after they are born.

Breastfeeding is not recommended for babies whose mothers use cocaine.

Every effort is made to keep mother and baby together but some babies need to be admitted to the neonatal unit for treatment as they withdraw from the effects of cocaine they received whilst in the womb.
**Risks for mothers**

Cocaine increases the risk of miscarriage in the first three months of pregnancy.

Cocaine increases your blood pressure and can cause your heart to beat erratically. This decreases the blood and oxygen supply to your baby.

Cocaine increases the risk of you going into labour early.

When you are pregnant cocaine is absorbed more quickly and when mixed with alcohol can be fatal.

**Help and support**

Cocaine is highly addictive and if you decide to give up it is likely that you will need support. Your midwife is there to help you. Below are the numbers of local support groups.

- **New Road Treatment and Advice Centre**
  023 8071 7171

- **The Bridge**
  023 8088 1400

- **Options**
  023 8063 0219

- **3D**
  023 8022 7704

- **New Forest Drug Action Team**
  01425 483352

- **FRANK**
  0800 776600
  [www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)

- **Karen Pulfer**
  Substance misuse specialist midwife
  Princess Anne Hospital
  Broadlands Birth Centre
  E5
  023 8079 6632

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**If you need a translation of this document, an interpreter or a version in large print, Braille or on audio tape, please telephone 023 8079 4688 for help.**

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