



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of Health
and Social Services

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 4, 2021

TO: Alaskan Health Care Providers

FROM: Anne Zink, MD, FACEP 
Chief Medical Officer, Department of Health and Social Services

SUBJECT: Breastfeeding mothers reporting marijuana use are encouraged to continue breastfeeding while making every effort to reduce the amount of marijuana used, whether smoked, vaped or eaten, or, preferentially, stopping marijuana use altogether,

Breastfeeding is the optimal feeding choice for most infants and benefits children in many ways, including the protective factor of maternal-infant bonding. The State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services recommends provider adherence to published guidelines on infant feeding from nationally recognized experts in the field of maternal and infant health. The Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine, American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists concur that there is stronger associative evidence of potential adverse health outcomes related to pregnancy and marijuana use than that between marijuana use and breastfeeding. Providers are encouraged to advise mothers who report use of marijuana to:

- stop marijuana use during pregnancy,
- continue breastfeeding while making every effort to reduce the amount of marijuana used, whether smoked, vaped or eaten, or, preferentially, stopping marijuana use altogether,
- protect children from second-hand marijuana smoke in their home or car, the same way they protect their children from secondhand tobacco smoke,
- do not drive a car while under the influence of marijuana with or without your child,
- safely store marijuana out of reach of children and pets; remind caregivers to do the same, and
- always have sober, unimpaired childcare providers take responsibility for their children whenever they are using any impairing substance, including marijuana.

Guidance from nationally recognized authorities on the subject are listed below. Order supplies of DHSS patient handouts on use of marijuana, alcohol and tobacco, during pregnancy and breastfeeding:
[http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/wcfh/Documents/perinatal/pub_order_form_october_2017_email_button%20\(fillable\).pdf](http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/wcfh/Documents/perinatal/pub_order_form_october_2017_email_button%20(fillable).pdf)

American Academy of Pediatrics. Policy Statement: Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk. March 2012.
<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/early/2012/02/22/peds.2011-3552.full.pdf>

American Academy of Pediatrics. Clinical Report: Marijuana Use During Pregnancy and Breastfeeding: Implications for Neonatal and Childhood Outcomes. September 2018.

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/142/3/e20181889.full.pdf>

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. Committee Opinion No.722: Marijuana Use during Pregnancy and Lactation. October 2017. Reaffirmed October 2021.

http://journals.lww.com/greenjournal/fulltext/2017/10000/Committee_Opinion_No722_Summary_Marijuana_Use.54.aspx

Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine. Clinical Protocol #21: Guidelines for Breastfeeding and Substance Use or Substance Use Disorder, Revised 2015. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4378642/>

