

TOBACCO DEPENDENCY IN PREGNANCY

A guide to inform conversations around tobacco dependency and carbon monoxide in pregnancy, whilst the use of CO screening has been suspended

ALL PREGNANT WOMEN MUST

- be asked about their smoking status and their exposure to secondhand smoke
- informed about the dangers of exposure to carbon monoxide from any source

EXPLAIN PRIOR TO QUESTIONS

- Smoking or being exposed to secondhand smoke during pregnancy increases your risk of miscarriage, stillbirth, having a premature or poorly baby and sudden infant death.
- If you smoke, quitting smoking is the best way to protect your baby.
- Also, as a safety measure, the government has classed pregnant women as a group at risk of severe illness from coronavirus.
- Evidence suggests that smokers who contract coronavirus are more likely to need intensive care than non-smokers. Smoking damages your lungs and weakens your immune system. This makes it more likely that you will have complications if you get sick and take longer to recover and this will also put your baby in danger.
- For those who smoke, there is help available from specialist practitioners and access to free medication.

QUESTIONS

- Have you ever smoked?
- If yes. Do you smoke?
- If no. Have you smoked even one cigarette since you became pregnant?
- Does anyone else in the household smoke?

IF A CURRENT SMOKER

I am very concerned for you and your baby. We have a great team of specialists who can support you to quit smoking. They will be there for you throughout your pregnancy and can provide free medication.

I am going to refer you now, as part of your routine care. The specialist service will call you in the next 2 days, it is very important that you speak to them. I will ask you how you are getting on next time we speak.

IF SMOKED DURING THE PREGNANCY BUT NOT A CURRENT SMOKER

Well done, that is really good for you and your baby. I know that will not have been easy, so I will refer you to a specialist who will be able to support you to stay quit. We know how easy it can be to slip back to smoking and we can offer you support and medication to help prevent this.

IF SOMEONE ELSE IN THE HOUSEHOLD SMOKES

Explain that breathing in secondhand smoke will affect their health and the health of the baby. Offer a referral to/contact details for the stop smoking service. Explain that it is very important that no one smokes inside their home.

CO POISONING - ALL PREGNANT WOMEN

Normally, at this visit, we would test your level of carbon monoxide but can't do this test because of COVID. Carbon monoxide is a poisonous gas which it comes from many things including smoking, faulty boilers, cookers and heaters. It can harm you and your baby, so we are very concerned that you are not exposed to high levels.

I'll can send you some information about carbon monoxide which includes a helpline number (Test Your Breath Leaflet). We recommend that every home should have a carbon monoxide alarm. Have you got one? If no, recommend they buy one or ask their landlord for one.

If you have any concerns about your exposure, please call the helpline or contact your midwife/maternity service immediately.