

## Risks of Opioid Misuse During Pregnancy

Untreated opioid use disorder during pregnancy can have devastating consequences for the unborn baby. Fluctuating levels of opioids in the mother may expose the fetus to repeated periods of withdrawal, which can harm placenta function.

### Other direct physical risks include:

- neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS)
- stunted growth
- preterm labor
- fetal convulsions
- fetal death

### Other indirect risks to the fetus include:

- increased risk for maternal infection (e.g., HIV, HBV, HCV)
- malnutrition and poor prenatal care
- dangers from drug seeking (e.g., violence and incarceration)

### What is Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome?

Neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS) occurs when an infant becomes dependent on opioids or other drugs used by the mother during pregnancy. The infant experiences withdrawal symptoms that can include (but are not limited to) tremors, diarrhea, fever, irritability, seizures, and difficulty feeding.

\*\*\*\***Buprenorphine and methadone** have both been shown to be safe and effective treatment for opioid use disorder during pregnancy. While HAS may still occur in babies whose mothers received these medications, it is less severe than it would be in the absence of treatment. Research does not support reducing medication dose to prevent NAS, as it may lead to increased illicit drug use, resulting in greater risk to the fetus.

### If you or someone you care about is pregnant and has an opioid use disorder:

Ask your healthcare provider about treatment options, or contact

Alpine County Behavioral Health Services for assistance.

**530-694-1816**

Source: National Institute on Drug Abuse; National Institutes of Health; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.