

**Make sure your doctor or nurse knows about all the medications and drugs you take during your pregnancy.**

## What types of drugs can cause NAS?

### Opioids

- Street drugs such as heroin and opium
- Medications such as Vicodin, Percocet, methadone, and Suboxone

### Cocaine and Crack

### Amphetamines

- Street drugs such as meth, or ecstasy
- Medications for ADD or ADHD such as Adderall or Ritalin

### Benzodiazepines

- Valium
- Xanax
- Ativan

### Marijuana

### Tobacco

### Alcohol

## What are the symptoms of NAS?

Symptoms of withdrawal may begin as early as 48-72 hours after birth or as late as 4 weeks of age. Symptoms of NAS in full term babies include:

- Unusual, irritability, constant crying
- High-pitched cry
- Trouble sleeping
- Trembling, twitching, jitteriness
- Trouble feeding – sucking may be weak or baby may want to suck all the time
- Diarrhea/Vomiting
- Poor weight gain
- Sweating
- Stuffy nose/sneezing
- Skin problems – skin appears raw
- Dehydration
- Fever or Unstable temperature
- Fast or very slow breathing

## What is the Treatment for NAS?

The goal of treatment for NAS is to help your baby feel better quickly. Your baby's treatment will depend on:

- The medications/drug taken
- Your baby's overall health
- Whether your baby was born full-term or premature

## Taking Care of a Baby with NAS

During Hospitalization: Any baby exposed to medications or drugs during pregnancy that could cause NAS will be watched closely after birth for symptoms of withdrawal.

Babies experiencing severe withdrawal may need extra care and medications or they may need to stay in the hospital longer than you had planned.

**Call your doctor and/or nurse if your baby has symptoms of neonatal abstinence syndrome.**

At Home: Babies with NAS are often fussy and may be hard to soothe. Some ways you can help calm your baby include:

- Gently rocking your baby
- Reducing the amount of noise and light around your baby
- Swaddling your baby in a blanket
- Letting your baby rest quietly between feedings
- Speaking softly and moving slowly with your baby
- Skin-to-skin contact with your baby

## Prevention of NAS

Neonatal abstinence syndrome can be prevented. If you are not yet pregnant, use birth control to prevent pregnancy or stop using medications or drugs before you become pregnant.



If you think you may be pregnant, **DO NOT** suddenly stop your use of drugs or medications! Doing so could harm both you and your baby. Your doctor will decide which drugs can be safely stopped or weaned during your pregnancy. If you are using illegal drugs or are regularly using any of the medications listed in this brochure, ask your doctor about resources available to help you and your baby.

### Resources

Aletheia House      205-324-6502  
The Foundry        205-424-HOPE  
Olivia's House      205-833-5708  
Alabama Department of Mental Health  
[www.mh.alabama.gov/sa](http://www.mh.alabama.gov/sa)

## Can I breastfeed my baby?

If you who are under a doctor's care for Methadone or Subutex, you may breastfeed. The small amount of these medications excreted in the breast milk may actually help with NAS. To breastfeed, you should be on a stable dosage of Methadone or Subutex. Your provider will perform tests to ensure you are taking only one medication. If you are using other medications or street drugs, including marijuana, you will not be able to breastfeed your baby.

**Use the space below for questions  
for your baby's doctor**

Developed through support from:

UAB SCHOOL OF NURSING

UAB MEDICINE



## Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome



### What is Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS)?

Most drugs can pass from you to your baby. Taking certain drugs and/or medications during pregnancy puts your baby at risk. Once your baby is born, they are no longer getting the drugs and may start to have symptoms of withdrawal, which is called Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS).