What You Can Do continued
Talking about your cannabis use can be difficult but it is important that you talk to your midwife or doctor or refer yourself to a local drug treatment agency.

The latter will enable you to:

- Explore personal issues and make positive change.
- Learn new ways to manage stress.
- Develop strategies to reduce or stop using cannabis and other drugs.

Regular pregnancy/antenatal care is important to make sure you are healthy and your baby is growing well.

If you find it difficult to stop using cannabis talk to your midwife, doctor or contact a local drug counselling agency.

Medway client’s contact: OPEN ROAD
http://openroad.org.uk/centres/in/medway/
Centre: 01634 566285

Swale clients: Forward Trust

Sources: Women and Alcohol Drug Service (Victoria, Australia) Patient Information

Cannabis In Pregnancy
Medway NHS Foundation Trust
is a smoke free organisation. As a healthcare provider, we believe it is important to provide the best possible environment for our patients, visitors and staff.

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Cannabis and Pregnancy

Cannabis is a depressant drug that slows down the activity of the central nervous system, including the brain. It can also have mild hallucinogenic effects.

Long term use of cannabis has been linked to anxiety and depression. Heavy cannabis use can affect your memory and how clearly you think. It may also increase the risk of paranoia and hallucinations.

The effects of cannabis on your pregnancy are very similar to those of tobacco smoking.

Effects on pregnancy
Cannabis use in pregnancy is potentially very harmful and should be avoided; however it is not associated with birth defects. The supply of oxygen and nutrition to your developing baby via the placenta (afterbirth) may be reduced.

This can result in reduced growth of your baby during pregnancy.

Some babies may be born smaller than average and have increased risk of illness in the newborn period.

Regular cannabis use in pregnancy may increase the effects of other drugs and alcohol on your developing baby.

Because cannabis use is often combined with tobacco use, there is increased risk to the developing baby due to the effects of tobacco smoke and nicotine.

Effects on your baby
After birth, your baby may require extra care and a longer stay in hospital. Some babies may have signs of withdrawal. Babies may be irritable, unsettled and have feeding difficulties.

Smoking during pregnancy and after your baby is born are each associated with an increased risk of SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome) or ‘cot death’, and the development of asthma and other breathing conditions in children.

Cannabis use in pregnancy is associated with learning and behavioural difficulties in some preschool children and young school age children.

Breast Feeding
Breast feeding is the best method of feeding your baby it is also good for your health. In order to safely breast feed your baby, it is recommended that you seek assistance from your midwife, doctor or local drug counselling agency to reduce or cease your cannabis use.

Cannabis can pass to babies through the breast milk.

THC (delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol) is the active chemical in cannabis. If you are using cannabis it will pass freely into breast milk and the THC levels can build up. THC attaches to fatty tissue and can remain in the baby’s body for several weeks.

If you breast feed and continue to use cannabis it is important to have your baby’s growth and development checked regularly by your Health Visitor.

What You Can Do
If you are thinking of becoming pregnant reducing or stopping your drug use would help you and your baby. Cannabis use may affect your parenting and enjoyment of your baby. It can impact on your family life and personal relationships.

See overleaf