

## A Snapshot of NAS in Arizona

### Facts We Can't Afford to Ignore

- ◆ Rates of babies born exposed to prescription narcotics are on the rise in Arizona.
- ◆ Between 2008-2013, nearly 3 out of every 1,000 babies born in Arizona were diagnosed with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome primarily caused by maternal opiate use.
- ◆ During the same period a total of 3,239 newborns were identified with either narcotics, cocaine, and/or alcohol.
- ◆ Newborns in Arizona with NAS are:
  - ⇒ Three times more likely to be low birth weight compared to those without NAS.
  - ⇒ Four times more likely to have respiratory symptoms compared to those without NAS.
  - ⇒ 17 times more likely to have seizures compared to those without NAS.
  - ⇒ Five times more likely to have feeding difficulties compared to those without NAS.
- ◆ Median cost for a NAS hospital stay is approximately \$31,000 versus \$2,500 for non-NAS related births.
- ◆ Average hospital stay for NAS birth is 13 days compared to two days for non-NAS related births.

We wish to thank the National Institute of Health for supplying the information in this pamphlet.

Source: AZ Dept. of Health Services Vital Statistics, 2014  
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0004566/>

### Stay Informed and Stay Safe

- ⇒ If you are pregnant, or might become pregnant, always ask your doctor before taking any medications, especially prescription narcotics like Oxycodone, Percocet, or Vicodin, as they may harm your baby.
- ⇒ Identifying prescription drug abuse as soon as possible is important. If you or someone you know needs help contact:
  - SAMHSA Treatment Referral Facility Locator hotline at **1-800-662-HELP (4357)**.
  - National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence helpline at **1-800-622-2255**.
  - Division of Behavioral Health Crisis Hotlines at **[azdhs.gov/bhs/crisis-hotlines.htm](http://azdhs.gov/bhs/crisis-hotlines.htm)**.
- ⇒ You can find local treatment resources at **[FindTreatment.samhsa.gov](http://FindTreatment.samhsa.gov)**.

### Safely Dispose of Prescription Medications

- Participate in prescription drug take-back days
- Drop off unused or expired medications at a prescription drug drop box
- Mix medications with coffee grounds or kitty litter and put them into an empty can or bag and throw them in the trash
- Don't flush down the toilet

To find a list of permanent prescription drug drop boxes visit [AZCJC.gov](http://AZCJC.gov) and click on Arizona Rx Initiative.

To learn more about the Arizona Rx Misuse and Abuse Initiative visit [AZCJC.gov](http://AZCJC.gov) and click on AZ Rx Initiative.



# NAS

## Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome



### You Can Prevent NAS

Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) is a group of problems that occur in a newborn who was exposed to addictive, illegal, or prescription drugs while in the mother's womb.



# Understanding **NAS**

## Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome

### ***Causes and Risk Factors***

Neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS) is a preventable syndrome occurring because the pregnant mother takes addictive, illegal, or prescription drugs such as:

- ◆ Opiates/Narcotics (heroin, methadone, and codeine)
- ◆ Amphetamines
- ◆ Benzodiazepines (diazepam, clonazepam)
- ◆ Cocaine

These and other substances pass through the placenta to the baby during pregnancy. The placenta is the organ that connects the baby to its mother in the womb. The baby becomes dependent along with the mother. At birth, the baby is still dependent on the drug. Because the baby is no longer getting the drug after birth, symptoms of withdrawal may occur.

### ***Signs and Tests***

It is important to have your baby checked out by a pediatrician. Many other conditions can produce the same symptoms as neonatal abstinence syndrome. The doctor will ask questions about the mother's drug use, such as what drugs she took during pregnancy.

### ***Symptoms***

The symptoms of neonatal abstinence syndrome depend on:

- ◆ The type of drug the mother used
- ◆ How the mother's body breaks down the drug
- ◆ How much of the drug she was taking
- ◆ How long she used the drug
- ◆ Whether the baby was born full-term or early (premature)

Symptoms depend on the drug involved. They can begin anywhere within *1 to 10 days after birth*. Symptoms may include:

- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| ◆ Blotchy skin coloring (mottling) | ◆ Excessive crying or high-pitched crying |
| ◆ Diarrhea                         | ◆ Excessive sucking                       |
| ◆ Fever                            | ◆ Irritability                            |
| ◆ Sleep problems                   | ◆ Poor feeding                            |
| ◆ Stuffy nose, sneezing            | ◆ Hyperactive reflexes                    |
| ◆ Trembling (tremors)              | ◆ Rapid breathing                         |
| ◆ Sweating                         | ◆ Seizures                                |
| ◆ Increased muscle tone            | ◆ Slow weight gain                        |
|                                    | ◆ Vomiting                                |

### ***Treatment***

Treatment depends on:

- ◆ The drug involved
- ◆ The infant's overall health
- ◆ Whether the baby was born full term

Infants with neonatal abstinence syndrome are often fussy and hard to calm. Tips for calming:

- ◆ Gently rocking the child
- ◆ Reducing noise and lights
- ◆ Swaddling the baby in a blanket

### ***Complications***

Drug and alcohol use during pregnancy can lead to many health problems in the baby, including:

- ◆ Birth defects
- ◆ Low birth weight
- ◆ Premature birth
- ◆ Small head circumference
- ◆ Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)
- ◆ NAS can last from 1 week to 6 months

### ***Prevention***

Discuss all medications, alcohol and tobacco use with your health care provider. If you are using drugs, including alcohol or tobacco, ask your health care provider for help with stopping as soon as possible. If you are already pregnant, talk to your health care provider about the best way to stop using while keeping yourself and the baby safe. Suddenly stopping prescription narcotics can lead to complications during pregnancy.

**Call 1-800-662-HELP (4357) if you or someone you know needs help.**