



## **IF YOU SMOKE, I SMOKE**

### **SMOKING AND PREGNANCY**

#### **Normal pregnancy**

At the start of pregnancy, your baby is very tiny but during the course of nine months it grows into a fully formed human being. It is well to remember that these nine months are the most important in your baby's young life. During this time in the womb, your baby depends on you for everything. For instance, if you take good, nourishing food your baby benefits. If you take plenty of rest and take iron tablets to prevent anaemia, your baby will benefit also. However, it is a sad fact that the baby may suffer during its time in the womb. For instance, if mother becomes infected in some way it is likely that the baby's health will be affected too. The baby may also be affected with certain drugs, such as alcohol and nicotine. Nicotine is a drug found in cigarettes and it can seriously affect the health of the unborn baby.

#### **Some important facts**

- If you smoke, your baby smokes also!
- If you smoke during pregnancy you are more likely to have a miscarriage (this is particularly true for women who miscarry for other reasons )
- Your baby is more likely to be born prematurely, i.e. before the full nine months has been completed. If this happens, the risk to the baby's life and death is increased.
- It is likely that the baby will be smaller. Babies of mothers who smoke weigh on average up to 8oz less than babies of non-smokers.
- The baby of a mother who smokes is more likely to die in the weeks before or after birth.
- If your baby has other problems such as blood pressure or haemorrhage, the effects are made worse by cigarette smoking.

#### **Is it worth stopping?**

Yes – if you stop in early pregnancy your baby will develop just like the baby of a non-smoking mother. Even if you stop later the danger will be lessened.

#### **How to stop**

First of all, you have to accept the fact that smoking will harm your baby. Every time you "pull" on a cigarette your baby does likewise, so the best thing to do is to make a decision to quit smoking.

You may be one of the lucky people who can make a decision to stop smoking and never take again a cigarette. On the other hand, you may find it difficult to stop immediately. If so write today for our booklet "So you want to stop smoking" which will help you break the smoking habit. In the meantime, make some rules for yourself.

### **Some rules**

- I will not smoke in the kitchen
- I will not smoke until after breakfast, lunch, or tea etc.
- I will just keep to one cigarette after each meal
- I will not smoke in company

It is well to remember also that your partner has a special interest in protecting the health of your unborn baby so ask him to help you to quit smoking, by not smoking in your presence and by encouragement in your efforts to stop.

### **A few points**

- The nine months spent by your baby in your womb is the most important period in its whole life.
- If you smoke during that period, your baby will smoke also, and as a result its health may be seriously damaged.
- It's never too late to protect your baby's health by giving up smoking.

So stop... and think of your baby.