

For women who smoke: Smoking has been associated with a number of pregnancy complications. One is an increased risk of ectopic pregnancy wherein the embryo becomes implanted in a fallopian tube or other abnormal site instead of the uterus. Cigarette smoking also appears to double a woman's risk of developing placental complications. These include placenta previa, a condition in which the placenta is attached too low in the uterus and covers part or all of the cervix and placental abruption, in which the placenta separates from the uterine wall before delivery. Smoking during pregnancy also increases the risk of stillbirth, miscarriage and severe vaginal bleeding.

Medical risks can also rise while a pregnant woman is in labor and after the baby's birth. Labor occurs when a pregnant woman's uterus contracts and pushes or delivers the baby from her body. The baby may be delivered through the woman's vagina or by caesarean section. A caesarean section is a surgical procedure.

*Possible medical risks of vaginal delivery may include injury to the bladder or rectum, a hole (fistula) between the bladder and vagina or rectum and vagina, hemorrhage (heavy bleeding), difficulties with future pregnancies, emergency treatment for any of the above problems and, rarely, death.*

*Possible medical risks of caesarean delivery include injury to the bowel or bladder, difficulty with future pregnancies, hemorrhage (heavy bleeding), possible hysterectomy due to complications or injury from the procedure, emergency treatment for any of the above problems and, rarely, death.*

Of the approximately 4 million births occurring annually in the United States, 40% are complicated by some form of a postpartum mood disorder.

## **Financial Assistance for Prenatal Care, Childbirth and Infant Care**

Financial help for prenatal care and childbirth depends on income. Applications for financial help are available at local Department of Health and Human Resources offices. Programs such as Right From The Start will pay or help pay the costs of doctor, clinic, hospital or other related expenses to help with prenatal care, childbirth delivery services and infant care. These services are paid for by Medicaid and Title V/Public Health. Right From The Start program brochures are available