

## TOBACCO 21's EFFECT ON MATERNAL & INFANT HEALTH

- Nicotine and tobacco use during pregnancy is directly associated with the top causes of infant death in NC, including prematurity, low birth weight, and SIDS/sleep-related death.<sup>1</sup> Tobacco use during pregnancy is the single greatest modifiable risk factor we have to reduce prematurity and infant death.<sup>1</sup>


### What poor outcomes are associated with maternal tobacco use?

**Maternal/Fetal Harms from Exposure during Pregnancy:**

- Infertility
- Miscarriage
- Ectopic Pregnancy
- Premature Birth
- Low Birth Weight
- Stillbirth
- SIDS/sleep-related death

**Infant/Child Harms from Second-Hand Tobacco Exposure:**

- SIDS and sleep-related death
- Ear infections
- Respiratory Infections
- Lead exposure
- Asthma
- Links with obesity, cancer & attention disorders in childhood
- Links with cardiovascular disease & diabetes in adulthood



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- Raising the minimum legal sale age of all nicotine and tobacco products to 21 years old would result in fewer teens ever starting to use tobacco (25% reduction in 15-17 year olds, and 15% reduction in 18-20 year olds) – meaning fewer adults who use tobacco when they become parents.<sup>2,3</sup> If fewer NC pregnant women and parents use tobacco, there will be more NC babies born the right size at the right time and fewer babies dying in their sleep.
- The Institute of Medicine estimates that there will be an immediate reduction in the number of babies born too soon and too small, as well as a reduction in the number of sleep-related infant deaths, and that reduction will become bigger the longer the law is in place and fewer teens ever start using nicotine or tobacco.<sup>2,3</sup>

Reduction (percentage) of Perinatal Health Outcome by Time Period Post Enactment of a Minimum Legal Sale Age of 21 for Tobacco<sup>2</sup>

	0-4 years	5-24 years	25-44 years	45-64 years	85-84 years
Preterm Birth	4.3%	11.6%	13.0%	13.0%	13.0%
Low Birth Weight	4.1%	10.8%	12.2%	12.2%	12.2%
SIDS/Sleep-Related Death	4.2%	16.0%	18.5%	18.5%	18.5%

1. National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (US) Office on Smoking and Health. The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta (GA): Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (US); 2014.
2. Institute of Medicine. 2015. *Public Health Implications of Raising the Minimum Age of Legal Access to Tobacco Products*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.
3. Bersak T, Lavender M, Sonchak-Ardan L. Impact of Tobacco-21 Laws on Maternal Smoking Behavior. *Health Econ.* 2025 Jun;34(6):1103-1120. doi: 10.1002/hec.4951. Epub 2025 Feb 23.

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