

# Asthma warning for pregnant women in Australia

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Asthma is the most common complication of pregnancy in Australia with harmful effects on babies, but many of these could be prevented a University of Adelaide researcher says.

Associate Professor Vicki Clifton from the University's Robinson Institute says asthma affects 16% of pregnancies in South Australia but SA medical statistics identify less than 7% of [pregnant women](#) as asthmatic.

"Asthma worsens in reproductive-aged women and just being pregnant can make women more susceptible to an asthma attack," says Associate Professor Clifton.

"There needs to be more awareness around the management of asthma during pregnancy and the importance of taking preventive medication while pregnant, especially in winter when there is an the increased risk of an asthma attack with colds and flu."

Associate Professor Clifton says many women with asthma are not being identified during pregnancy. "It's being under-reported during antenatal visits and therefore under-treated. There is also a misconception with pregnant women that their asthma medication may harm the baby. In fact, the asthma is much more likely to be harmful than the [preventive medicine](#)," she says.

Associate Professor Clifton will discuss her research on asthma and

pregnancy tomorrow night, as part of the University's Research Tuesdays free public seminar series. She leads the Pregnancy and Development Group of the Robinson Institute based at the Lyell McEwin Hospital.

She says that 55% of women with asthma will have at least one acute [asthma attack](#) during pregnancy and that can lead to detrimental effects on the baby including growth restriction, pre-term delivery or even still births.

"These poor outcomes are mostly preventable with appropriate asthma management, involving regular visits to the GP and a management plan that covers knowing when to take and increase asthma medication and when it's important to go to the hospital emergency department," she says.

"My research shows that if asthma is managed properly there is less risk of an acute attack and therefore reduced risk of poor outcomes for the baby." More information on asthma and [pregnancy](#) can be obtained from the [Asthma SA](#) website [www.asthmasa.org.au](http://www.asthmasa.org.au) .

Provided by University of Adelaide

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