



### How does alcohol hurt my baby?

If you drink when pregnant, alcohol can cause birth defects and brain damage to your developing baby. Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is the term used to describe the range of harms that can result from alcohol use during pregnancy. These harms can include brain damage, vision and hearing problems, slow growth, and birth defects such as bones that are not properly formed and heart problems. The brain damage can mean that your child will have lifelong learning difficulties and problems in memory, reasoning and judgment.

### What drinks are harmful?

All drinks containing alcohol can be harmful to your developing baby. Alcohol is in beer, wine, spirits, coolers and ciders.

### Are there any safe times for pregnant women to drink alcohol?

Drinking alcohol can be harmful to your baby *at any point* during pregnancy. The baby's brain and nervous system develop all through pregnancy.

**No Safe Time**

### Is there a safe amount to drink?

There is no known safe level of alcohol use in pregnancy. So it is safest not to drink at all when you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant.

It is never too late to quit or cut down on your drinking. Drinking more than 2 drinks per day, and drinking regularly are most harmful to the developing baby. A drink means a can of beer, cider or cooler (350ml/12oz), a glass of wine (150ml/5oz), or a shot of spirits (sometimes referred to as hard liquor) (40 ml/1.5oz). Every step you take to stop drinking and be healthy during your pregnancy can be helpful.

**No Safe Amount**

### What if I was drinking before I knew I was pregnant?

The more you drink and the more often you drink, the more likely it is that you will harm your baby. Quitting now and looking after your own health are the best ways to ensure your baby is healthy. As well as not drinking alcohol there are other steps you can take to be healthy and to protect your baby.

### What else can I do to protect my baby?

- Get lots of rest
- See your doctor, nurse or midwife regularly
- Eat healthy food
- Stop or cut down on your use of cigarettes and other drugs
- Reduce your stress. Stress that results from cutting down or quitting alcohol is not as harmful to your baby as the alcohol itself. It is better to quit or cut down on your drinking. Try reducing stress by going for walks or talking with a supportive friend or family member.

### Where can I get more info and help?

If you need help to stop drinking or cut down, be sure to talk to someone. Friends, family, or a doctor, nurse or counsellor can help.

You can get 24 hour confidential information and advice from nurses at the BC Nurseline.  
Province-wide toll-free 1-866-215-4700  
Greater Vancouver 604-215-4700  
Deaf and Hearing Impaired 1-866-889-4700.

If you need help from an alcohol counsellor, you can call the Alcohol and Drug Information and Referral Service, for information on where counselling is available in your area.  
Province-wide toll-free 1-800-663-1441  
Greater Vancouver 604-660-9382.

## Alcohol and Pregnancy

*Preventing Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder*



# Alcohol and Pregnancy Don't Mix

*Alcohol can hurt  
your baby*

It is safest  
not to drink  
when pregnant

For information call the BC Nurseline  
1-866-215-4700

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