

Pregnancy is a very important time

Notes:

- There are many important things to consider about babies and pregnancy. You may not think they are important to know about because neither you (nor your partner) is pregnant or even thinking about getting pregnant right now. But it is important to think about many things before you even consider having a baby.
- One of the most important things for men and women to think about is how to have a healthy pregnancy, and one of the best ways to have a healthy pregnancy is to avoid alcohol.
- If a woman drinks alcohol when she is pregnant, the baby drinks the alcohol, too. Babies are not developed enough to be able to digest alcohol safely, so the alcohol may hurt them. Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can result in a baby with a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder or FASD.



Babies born with FASD

Notes:

FASD is a set of birth defects that makes babies sick.

- **Babies born with FASD:**
 - **Are sick and cry a lot.** Even though many babies have minor illnesses, babies with FASD will likely be sick a lot more. Babies with FASD also cry a lot more than other babies. Babies with FASD may also have difficulty eating.
 - **Are small and not very strong.** A baby with FASD can be born small. Babies born small will stay smaller than average as they grow up.
 - **Have a hard time learning.** They may have problems behaving and being around other kids.
 - **Can't understand as quickly or concentrate for very long.** Children with FASD need a lot more attention and patience than other children.
 - **May look different.** Children born with FASD may have different facial features from other children.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) is a cluster of birth defects that occur when a woman drinks alcohol during pregnancy. The features of FASD are:

- **Growth retardation:** Babies may grow at a slower than normal rate during pregnancy and after birth.
- **Appearance:** Children with FASD have distinct facial features. These can include shortened eye slits, flattened mid-face, a flattened midline ridge between nose and lip, thin upper lip and other features. A child with FASD may have some or all of these features.
- **Brain and central nervous system:** The most serious effect of alcohol on the fetus is the permanent damage to the brain and central nervous system. This includes small brain and head circumference, brain malformations, developmental delay, intellectual impairment, behavioural disorders, learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder and hyperactivity.



Facts about FASD:

Notes:

Important Things to Know About FASD

- It doesn't go away. Babies born with FASD will have it for the rest of their lives.
- It is preventable. If a woman does not drink alcohol at all while she is pregnant, then there is no way she can have a baby with FASD.
- No amount of alcohol is known to be safe during pregnancy, so it is best not to drink alcohol at all.
- Any alcoholic drink can hurt a baby, including beer, liquor, liqueur, coolers and wine.
- Alcohol can hurt a baby throughout a woman's entire pregnancy. However, some of the worst harm can occur during the first few months, when many women do not even know they are pregnant. Therefore, if you (your partner) are going to be drinking, use birth control when having sex.
- The damage depends on the timing, amount and frequency of drinking alcohol while pregnant. It also depends on body type, nutritional health, and other lifestyle characteristics of the pregnant woman. Therefore, during pregnancy: "Less alcohol is better. No alcohol is best."



Hard to believe that alcohol can harm the baby?

Notes:

- You may feel confused by all the different information you hear about alcohol and pregnancy.
- But we know this for sure: using alcohol and other drugs during pregnancy can cause babies to have learning, behaviour or health problems as they grow up.
- If you are confused about all the information you hear about alcohol and pregnancy, you can call a doctor, a public health nurse or Health Links for more information.



What is risky drinking?

Notes:

- These are all signs that a person may be involved in risky drinking. If you feel like you need to talk to someone about your drinking, or about the drinking patterns of someone you know, please call your health care provider, Health Links at (204) 788-8200 (toll-free 1-888-315-9257), or AFM at (204) 944-6200, and they can connect you with a service that can help.



Reducing harm

Notes:

A harm reduction approach:

- Any amount of alcohol may be harmful. The less alcohol consumed during pregnancy, the better the chances of having a healthy baby. No alcohol during pregnancy is the best choice.
- However, some women might not be able to quit drinking alcohol altogether when they are pregnant. Even if a woman can't quit, cutting down will help the baby be healthier. The less alcohol consumed during pregnancy, the healthier the baby will be.
- Cutting down or quitting at any time during pregnancy will improve a woman's chances of being healthy and having a healthy baby.
- Particularly risky patterns of drinking include having more than two drinks on a daily basis, and binge drinking which means having four or more drinks on any one occasion.
- Alcohol hurts an unborn baby more than many other drugs. So it helps the baby to reduce the amount of alcohol a pregnant woman drinks even if she continues to smoke tobacco and marijuana, which are also harmful. If you have questions about the effect of certain drugs on an unborn baby, please contact your health care provider.
- There are other life circumstances that can significantly improve your (your partner's) chances of having a healthy baby. You (your partner) need safe adequate housing, good nutrition, a supportive partner, family and friends, and emotional and physical safety.



Some other ways to have a healthy pregnancy:

Notes:

- Plenty of exercise – Moderate, low-impact exercise has been shown to really help pregnant women. It reduces stress, provides extra energy, and gets a woman's body ready for childbirth.
- Good nutrition – Now is not the time to cut calories or go on a diet. Pregnancy is the time to eat lots of fruits, vegetables, whole-grain breads, foods that contain calcium and extra fluids.
- Sleep – A pregnant woman's body is working hard, so pregnant women will get tired much faster. It is important to rest lots to keep energy up and feel good.
- Prenatal care – A pregnant woman and her baby need regular prenatal care to remain as healthy as possible. Prenatal care can be provided by a doctor, a midwife or a nurse.



Some ways a partner can help with a healthy pregnancy:

Notes:

Be patient and supportive

Both partners should remember that during pregnancy a woman may be physically uncomfortable and may have mood swings because of changes in hormone levels. An understanding attitude from her partner can make a big difference.

Reduce stress

Conflict with a partner is a key source of stress during pregnancy. Studies show that when a woman reports high stress during her pregnancy, her baby is more likely to be born with health problems.

Promote good nutrition

Partners can have a positive influence on their pregnant partners—and on the well-being of their babies—by passing up "junk" food and instead eating food that is high in good nutrition. Encourage your pregnant partner to eat balanced meals and to take a multi-vitamin containing folic acid during the early months of pregnancy.

Share a healthy lifestyle

Parents-to-be should avoid cigarettes, alcohol and drugs and support the pregnant partner to avoid them too. If you can't stop drinking, try to make sure you don't drink around your pregnant partner. It will just make it more difficult for her to stop drinking.

Use effective contraception if you're not ready for a baby

If you or your partner are not ready to stay healthy during pregnancy, always use condoms or another reliable birth control method during sexual intercourse.



Some ways friends and family can help with a healthy pregnancy:

Notes:

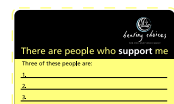
- Respect and support her decisions. Try not to pressure her. Support her right to make healthy choices.
- Put her needs first. Other people's drug use can affect a woman and her baby's health. Try not to smoke, drink or use other drugs around pregnant women, especially if they are trying to quit. You have a responsibility to be supportive, and you can be an important source of strength.
- Everyone around a pregnant woman has an impact on her life and her decisions. If you know anyone who is pregnant, be supportive. In fact, being supportive and encouraging during a woman's pregnancy will show her how much you care. A woman's partner, family and friends can all help her have a healthy baby.
- If you are a friend or family member of someone who is pregnant, try to provide her with a healthy alternative to going out and partying. Invite her over for a movie and popcorn, or ask her to go for a walk with you. You will be doing something really important.



Healthy Choices for You

Notes:

- If you are pregnant, try to spend more time with the friends and family who are supportive.
- Think about who is supportive in your life. Who could you call if you needed help, were in a crisis or just needed to talk?
- We have a card that we can hand out to anyone who is interested. You can write the family and friends that you have identified as supportive on the card. Then, whenever you need to call someone for help, you have the numbers ready.



For support or more information, contact:

Notes:

Phone a counsellor and, even if he or she doesn't have the information you need, they can probably refer you to someone who does. Talk to a doctor, midwife or community health nurse. Don't give up. Help is out there. Connect with someone who is right for you. If you or anyone else you know is in a crisis situation, it is important to call someone who can help.

There are many programs and services available:

Addictions Foundation of Manitoba – Program Information:

- Winnipeg – (204) 944-6200
- Brandon – (204) 729-3838
- Thompson – (204) 677-7300 or
toll-free 1-866-291-7774

Clinic for Alcohol and Drug Exposed Children (204) 787-1822 or (204) 787-1828

Counselling Services:

- The Family Centre of Winnipeg – (204) 947-1401
- Mount Carmel Clinic – (204) 582-2311
- Women's Health Clinic – (204) 947-1517 or
hearing impaired (204) 956-0385

FAS (Fetal Alcohol Syndrome) Information Manitoba toll-free 1-866-877-0050

Health Links (204) 788-8200 in Winnipeg or toll-free 1-888-315-9257

Healthy Child/Healthy Baby Programs (204) 945-2266 or toll-free 1-888-848-0140

Kids Help Phone toll-free 1-800-668-6868

Klinik Crisis Line (24 hour)

- (204) 786-8686 or toll-free 1-888-322-3019
- Teen Klinik (204) 784-4090

Midwifery - Manitoba Government Inquiry (all regional health services) toll-free 1-866-626-4862

Osborne House Crisis Line (24 hour) (204) 942-3052 or toll-free 1-877-977-0007

Sexual Assault Crisis Line (24 hour) (204) 786-8631 or toll-free 1-888-292-7565 or hearing impaired (204) 784-4097

Teen Touch – toll-free 1-800-563-8336

Winnipeg Health Sciences Centre, Child and Women's Health Programs – (204) 787-2480

To obtain additional copies of
this resource
please contact:

**Addictions Foundation of Manitoba –
William Potoroka Memorial Library**
1031 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3G 0R8
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