



ALCOHOL & PREGNANCY  
**DON'T MIX**

### 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 judgement.

### What drinks are harmful?

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

### no safe time

### 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 throughout the entire pregnancy.

### no safe amount

### Is there a safe amount to drink?

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



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

You can get 24-hour confidential health information and advice at BC Nurse Line or [www.bchealthguide.org](http://www.bchealthguide.org)

Toll-free in BC	1 866 215 4700
In Greater Vancouver	604 215 4700
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

[www.bcliqorstores.com](http://www.bcliqorstores.com)

It is never too late to quit or cut down on your drinking. Drinking more than two 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) (40ml/1.5oz). Every step you take to stop drinking and develop healthy lifestyle habits during your pregnancy can be helpful.

### 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 that 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.



Alcohol can hurt your baby—it is safest not to drink when pregnant.

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