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Pregnant? Don't Drink Alcohol



When a pregnant woman drinks alcohol, so does her unborn baby.

This is the third in a series of articles about preventing birth defects.

How much do you or your friends know about drinking alcohol during pregnancy? Read below to find out why you should not drink alcohol during pregnancy.

5 Things You Should Know About Drinking Alcohol During Pregnancy

- **Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders, or FASDs, are caused by drinking alcohol during pregnancy. These conditions are among the top preventable birth defects and developmental disabilities.** FASDs can cause problems in how a person grows, learns, looks, and acts. FASDs can also cause birth defects of the heart, brain, and other major organs. These problems last a lifetime.
- Health Professional?**

 - View or download FAS: [Guidelines for Referral and Diagnosis](#). (📎 612KB)
 - [Order materials](#) free of charge.
- **There is no known amount of alcohol that is safe to drink while pregnant.** All drinks with alcohol can hurt an unborn baby. A 12-ounce can of beer has as much alcohol as a 5-ounce glass of wine or a 1-ounce shot of liquor.
 - **There is no safe time to drink during pregnancy.** Alcohol can harm a baby at any time during pregnancy. It can cause problems in the early weeks of pregnancy, before a woman even knows she is pregnant.
 - **About 1 in 12 pregnant women in the United States reports alcohol use.** And about 1 in 30 pregnant women in the United States reports binge drinking (having five or more drinks at one time)*.
 - **FASDs are 100% preventable.** Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders are 100% preventable—if a woman does not drink alcohol while she is pregnant.

Surgeon's General Advice About Pregnancy and Alcohol Use

In 2005, the US Surgeon General gave advice about pregnancy and alcohol use:



- A pregnant woman should not drink alcohol.
- A woman who is trying to get pregnant should not drink alcohol because she will not know she is pregnant for the first few weeks of the pregnancy.
- A pregnant woman who has already used alcohol during her pregnancy should stop right away.

- Because nearly half of all pregnancies in the United States are unplanned, women of childbearing age should talk with their doctor about how to prevent an alcohol-exposed pregnancy.
- Health professionals should ask women of childbearing age about their alcohol use, tell them about the risks of alcohol use during pregnancy, and advise them not to drink alcohol during pregnancy.

For More Information

- [Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome**](#)
- [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, FASD Center for Excellence](#)
- [National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism](#)
- [March of Dimes**](#)



[Put Down That Drink If You Are Pregnant \(Or Trying to Be\)!](#)

🔊 podcast, 2 minutes 28 seconds



Know someone who is thinking about getting pregnant?
Send her this [Health-e-Card from CDC](#)



Know someone who is pregnant?
Send her this [Health-e-Card from CDC](#)



Know someone who just had a baby?
Send her this [Health-e-Card from CDC](#)

Additional articles in the series on preventing birth defects: [Folic Acid Awareness](#) and [Preventing Infections During Pregnancy](#)

* In these findings, binge drinking was defined as having five or more drinks at one time. More recently, the definition of binge drinking for women has been changed to four or more drinks at one time.

Page last reviewed: January 21, 2008

Page last updated: January 21, 2008

Content source: [National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities](#)

Content owner: [National Center for Health Marketing](#)

URL for this page: www.cdc.gov/Features/AlcoholFreePregnancy

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