

Why Alcohol and Pregnancy Do Not Mix

A mother's alcohol use during pregnancy can cause birth defects and developmental disabilities. These problems are completely preventable if a mother does not drink alcohol while pregnant.



The U.S. Surgeon General, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and many other national organizations all agree

that all alcohol should be avoided during pregnancy.

Women Need to Get the Facts:

- **Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can cause a baby to be born with birth defects and have disabilities.** These conditions, called fetal alcohol spectrum disorders, or FASDs, are among the top preventable birth defects and developmental disabilities. FASDs can cause problems in how a person looks, grows, learns and acts. FASDs can also cause birth defects of the heart, brain, and other major organs. These problems last a lifetime.
- **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.
- **Too many women think drinking alcohol during pregnancy won't hurt their unborn baby.** About 1 in 12 pregnant women in the United States reports alcohol use.
- **FASDs are 100% preventable**—if a woman does not drink alcohol while she is pregnant.

Ways to prevent FASDs:

- If you are pregnant or trying to become pregnant, do not drink alcohol.
- Even if you are not trying to get pregnant, but could become pregnant, do not drink alcohol.
- If you are pregnant and drinking alcohol, stop now.
-

Mothers-to-be are not the only ones who can prevent FASDs. Friends and family members can play an important role by encouraging women to avoid alcohol during pregnancy. Schools, health and social service organizations, and communities can promote FASD prevention activities through education and intervention.

If you have questions about alcohol and pregnancy, talk to your doctor, nurse or other health care professional.

For more information, go to the CDC's Web site at www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/fas.