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# Alcohol

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## Alcohol and Pregnancy

It is safest not to drink alcohol while pregnant.

### **This is because...**

A developing baby's brain and body are sensitive to alcohol.

Alcohol can cause damage to the baby.

### **Is there any time that is safe to drink?**

It is best to not drink at any time during your pregnancy.

This is because your baby is developing throughout your pregnancy.

### **How much alcohol is risky?**

Nobody knows how much alcohol is safe during pregnancy.

Some babies might be affected by even a little bit of alcohol.

Binge drinking (having more than 3 drinks per occasion) and heavy drinking are the most unsafe for a developing baby.

### **Are some drinks safer than others?**

No, all drinks with alcohol are unsafe for a developing baby.

This includes beer, wine, hard liquor, coolers, ciders and non-alcoholic beers.

### **What if I drank before I knew I was pregnant?**

Many women drink before they realize they are pregnant.

The best thing is to stop drinking as soon as you can.

Talk to your health care provider.

**It is never too late to stop drinking alcohol!**





## What is FASD?

You may have heard that drinking alcohol during pregnancy can cause a baby to be born with FASD (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder).

FASD describes what can happen when a baby is exposed to alcohol before birth.

## What does FASD look like?

In many cases, FASD is **INVISIBLE**. Children with FASD may have trouble with learning and behaviour. This can include:

- Adding and subtracting and handling money
- Thinking things through or reasoning
- Learning from past experience
- Understanding consequences
- Remembering
- Getting along with others



## Is there a cure for FASD?

There is no cure for FASD. This is why people with FASD may need life-long help with things like:

- Finishing school
- Managing money
- Getting and keeping a job
- Socializing with other people

## Most importantly...

People with FASD may be very good at many things. They may be loving, friendly, musical, loyal, and show great determination to succeed in life.

People with FASD are mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers. They are valuable members of our community!





## Alcohol and Breastfeeding

The alcohol a woman drinks will go into her bloodstream and her breastmilk.

Not much is known about the effects of alcohol on breastfeeding.

This is why it is best to avoid breastfeeding for about 2 hours after drinking 1 alcoholic beverage.

You can also pump and store breastmilk before drinking alcohol so that it is ready for your baby at any time.

Speak to your Public Health Nurse for more information.



## Alcohol and Parenting

Children learn by watching the world around them.

You can help show your children how to make healthy and responsible choices around alcohol.

For example, you can show your children you don't need alcohol to have fun or cope with life.

As a parent, you are responsible for children and to make sure they stay safe.

- If you are planning to drink, ask a responsible adult to look after your children
- Keep alcohol in a safe place where children cannot reach it
- If a child accidentally drinks alcohol, seek medical attention
- Avoid drinking when using other drugs or medications



## Supporting Women On Their Journey

Partners, families, and friends can support women to not drink during pregnancy by:

- Being caring and non-judgemental
- Not drinking yourself while she is pregnant
- Offering her non-alcoholic drinks, and bringing non-alcoholic drinks to social events
- Doing activities that do not involve alcohol
- Telling anyone offering her alcohol that it is safest not to drink during pregnancy
- Reducing some of her stress (ask her what would help)
- Recognizing her efforts and celebrating small successes





# What can I do if I drink alcohol?

It may be a struggle to not drink, but every little step you take helps you and your baby.

Steps could be to:

- Stop drinking alcohol if you can
- Cut back on how much you drink or how often
- Take care of your health



Taking care of yourself also helps take care of your baby.

Here are some things you can do:

- Attend your prenatal appointments
- Be active when you can, rest when you need
- Eat foods that you like that have lots of nutrients - vegetables and fruits, milk or milk alternatives, whole wheat grains, fish, meats and alternatives
- Drink lots of water
- Cut down or quit smoking cigarettes
- Reduce stress - talk with a friend, take a bath, go for a walk

## You Are Not Alone!



## Where To Find Help

**There are lots of places that offer support and treatment.**

**Speak with a worker about which one may be right for you.**

Addictions Foundation of Manitoba (AFM).....	204-944-6200
AFM Women's Centre and Family Program.....	204-944-6229
Aboriginal Health & Wellness.....	204-925-3700
Behavioural Health Foundation.....	204-269-3430
Insight Mentoring Program.....	204-925-3750
Mothering Project, Mount Carmel Clinic, Intake Line.....	204-479-0203
Native Addictions Council of Manitoba.....	204-586-8395
New Directions FASD Program.....	204-582-8658
Salvation Army- Anchorage Program.....	204-946-9401
Klinic Crisis Line (24 hour).....	204-786-8686

