

I'm pregnant and I've been drinking alcohol. What should I do now?

If you have already been drinking small amounts of alcohol during pregnancy, be reassured that the risk of harm to your baby is low. But it is never too late to stop. The sooner you stop drinking, the better it will be for both you and your baby.

If you think you might have an alcohol problem or need help to stop drinking, talk to your midwife or doctor, or contact an alcohol support agency.

For more information visit
www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk



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Alcohol & Pregnancy don't mix

Avoid alcohol when pregnant or trying for a baby
... and give your baby the best start.

Alcohol can harm your unborn baby

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Alcohol & Pregnancy

don't mix

Did you know that if you drink alcohol when you are pregnant, you can harm your unborn baby?

If you drink heavily during pregnancy, a particular group of problems could develop, known as Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS). Children with FAS have restricted growth, distinctive facial features including small eyes and flat area between the nose and upper lip, and lifelong learning and behaviour problems.

Regularly drinking in pregnancy and binge drinking can still lead to less severe forms of FAS, known as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). Although FASD babies can look healthy, their brains are permanently damaged.

The stage in pregnancy in which the mother is drinking determines what damage the alcohol may cause. The first 12 weeks of pregnancy is when the baby's limbs and organs are developing. This is where the most severe physical damage can occur.

There is no 'safe time' for drinking alcohol during pregnancy. Your baby's central nervous system, including brain growth, happens throughout the pregnancy.

So how much can I drink?

Researchers don't know how much alcohol is safe to drink when pregnant. They do know that the risk of damage to your unborn baby increases the more you drink and that binge drinking is especially harmful.

No alcohol is the best and safest choice.



Why is no alcohol the best choice?

It is the only way to be sure that you are giving your unborn baby the best chance as FAS and FASD are entirely preventable.

It is the safest advice given that the exact level for risky consumption is unknown.

It can be difficult to measure exactly the number of units and the strength of drinks. Some glasses of wine could contain 3-4 units, not 1.

Women who are trying for a baby will :

- 1) increase their chances of becoming pregnant and having a safe pregnancy and
- 2) reduce any worry about alcohol-related damage before their pregnancy is confirmed.

Of course other factors also play a part in the development of an unborn baby. It is important to have a healthy diet, and not to smoke or take other drugs.