

EVEN A SMALL CHANGE CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE FOR YOU AND YOUR BABY

WHAT CAN I DO IF I FIND IT HARD TO GIVE UP ALCOHOL?

If you drink alcohol every day and/or you think you will find it difficult to cut down or give up alcohol (or other drugs) ask your health centre, doctor, drug & alcohol counselling service or someone you trust for help. Pregnancy is a shared responsibility and partners, family, friends and community can also play a role in supporting you during this time and helping you stay alcohol free. It's never too late in a pregnancy to cut down or stop drinking and this will increase your chances of having a healthy baby. For further information or support contact admin@nofasard.org.au

SO FOR THE HEALTH OF YOUR UNBORN BABY - REMEMBER:

- No alcohol is the best and safest choice for your unborn baby.
- It's never too late to cut down or stop drinking alcohol during your pregnancy.
- It is important not to smoke or take other drugs.
- Maintain a good diet, including folate and vitamin B supplements and receive good antenatal care.
- Even a small change can make a big difference for you and your baby.

SOME IDEAS FOR SAYING NO TO ALCOHOL WHEN YOU ARE PREGNANT OR PLANNING TO BECOME PREGNANT.

- No thanks!
- I'd rather have juice, thanks.
- No thanks, I'm being kind to my baby!
- No thanks, when I drink alcohol so does my baby!
- No thanks, not while I'm pregnant!
- No thanks, my baby's too young to drink alcohol!
- No thanks, I'm celebrating being pregnant!

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NO ALCOHOL IS THE BEST AND SAFEST CHOICE FOR YOUR UNBORN BABY

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This brochure is produced by
National Organisation for Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
And Related Disorders NOFASARD

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August 2011©



NOFASARD is supported by the Australian Government through the Department of Health and Ageing. The views and opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Government.

ALCOHOL & PREGNANCY

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BE KIND TO ME
STAY ALCOHOL FREE

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ARE YOU PREGNANT OR THINKING OF BECOMING PREGNANT?

This brochure gives information that will help you make healthy choices for you and your baby.

NO ALCOHOL IS THE BEST AND SAFEST CHOICE FOR YOUR UNBORN BABY

IF I'M PREGNANT OR PLANNING TO BECOME PREGNANT SHOULD I DRINK ALCOHOL?

Alcohol is a substance that can cause harm to the developing baby at any time during pregnancy. There is no safe time to drink alcohol during pregnancy and there is no safe amount. As alcohol can cause harm even before your pregnancy has been confirmed it is also best to avoid alcohol if you are trying to get pregnant or not using reliable birth control.

Not all babies are affected to the same degree and although the risk of damage is more likely the more you drink, any amount of alcohol may cause harm so don't take a chance. No alcohol at all during pregnancy is the best and safest choice for the health of your unborn baby.

WHAT CAN DRINKING ALCOHOL DO TO MY UNBORN BABY?

When you drink the alcohol passes from your blood stream into your baby's blood stream and your baby will have the same blood alcohol level as you do. The alcohol can damage and affect the growth of the baby's cells and can cause miscarriage, stillbirth, and a range of lifelong disorders including brain damage, known as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD). The effects can range from mild to severe.

WHAT ABOUT ALCOHOL AND BREASTFEEDING?

Alcohol passes into the breast milk and the baby drinks it. The baby's brain and spinal cord continue to grow after birth, and can be affected by alcohol. Studies show that alcohol in breast milk interferes with the mother's milk production and causes babies to eat less and to sleep less. Breastfeeding mothers who choose to drink alcohol after giving birth should carefully plan a feeding schedule. They could do this by pumping and storing

breast milk before drinking and/or waiting until all of the alcohol is out of their bodies before breastfeeding.

WHAT ARE FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDERS?

FASD is an educational, umbrella term used to describe a spectrum (group) of conditions that can affect the unborn child when alcohol is consumed in pregnancy. These disorders don't always appear at birth and may not be noticed until the child starts school.

The medical diagnoses that come under the FASD spectrum include: Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) partial Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (pFAS) Neurodevelopmental Disorder alcohol exposed.

Although most children with FASD don't look different they may have a mix of disorders that last for life. These include physical problems, developmental delays, learning problems, impulsiveness, problems getting along with others, hyperactivity (ADHD) and problems controlling their behaviour.

“ IF YOU DRINK ALCOHOL WHEN YOU ARE PREGNANT YOU MAY HAVE A MISCARRIAGE OR THE ALCOHOL MAY CAUSE YOUR BABY TO BE BORN WITH FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDERS (FASD) ”

I KNOW SOME WOMEN WHO DRANK WHEN PREGNANT AND THEIR BABIES AREN'T AFFECTED. WHY?

Researchers do not know why for sure. What they do know is the effects of drinking are different for every woman and her baby. You can't compare yourself with your friends because some women and their babies will be affected more than others and eating habits, living conditions, and using other drugs including tobacco all play a part.

WHAT IF I HAD ALCOHOL BEFORE I KNEW I WAS PREGNANT?

If you have consumed small amounts of alcohol during pregnancy, be reassured that the risk of harm to your baby is low. For your baby's health it is best to stop drinking for the rest of your pregnancy. Try not to be alarmed, talk to your doctor, midwife or professional support person about your alcohol intake and be sure to receive routine prenatal care.

