It is never too late to stop alcohol use during pregnancy.

Stopping alcohol use, with support from a health professional, is safest for your health and that of your developing baby.

Help is available. Services you can turn to for information and support are listed below:

National Alcohol and Other Drug Hotline

For support and counselling, phone **1800 250 015** or visit **drughelp.gov.au**

Alcohol and Drug Foundation

For information and referral to services, visit **adf.org.au**

Alcoholics Anonymous Australia

For self-help and peer support, phone **1300 222 222** or visit **aa.org.au**

Smart Recovery in Australia

For self-help and peer support, visit **smartrecoveryaustralia.com.au**

NOFASD Australia

For information or support on FASD, phone the NOFASD Helpline on **1800 860 613** or visit **nofasd.org.au**

To stop drinking suddenly without medical support can sometimes be dangerous for you and your baby. It is best to speak with a doctor to guide you. To find a local doctor, visit **healthdirect.gov.au.**

Learn more about alcohol during pregnancy and breastfeeding at **everymomentmatters.org.au**

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This resource is developed by NOFASD Australia and the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE). It is endorsed and funded by the Australian Government.

Learn more about NOFASD at NOFASD.org.au

Learn more about FARE at fare.org.au

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Support for becoming alcohol-free during pregnancy

"Women struggle in silence with alcohol dependence – it is often unrecognised.

Pregnancy can be an opportunity to address alcohol dependency."

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The advice from Australia's leading health and medical research group is:

If you are pregnant or planning a pregnancy, you should not drink alcohol.[1]

This is because alcohol passes directly to your baby at every stage of pregnancy and can damage a developing baby's brain, body, and organs.

Alcohol during pregnancy can:

- increase the risk of miscarriage, stillbirth, premature birth, or low birth weight,
- lead to a preventable disability known as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).

Alcohol is also an addictive substance, which means people can find it difficult to stop.

If you are pregnant and finding it hard not to drink alcohol, help is available.

You can reach out to someone you trust who can help you find the support you need.

A doctor, health care professional, or alcohol and other drug worker can help you to safely stop drinking.

"Some people will need a lot of support to change their drinking, and if you're dependent on alcohol, you will need help to do this. See your GP to find out your options. You're not alone, your GP is here to help."

- Hester, GP and addiction specialist.

[1]Australian Guidelines to Reduce Health Risks from Drinking Alcohol, National Health and Medical Research Council.

From mothers of children with FASD who experienced alcohol dependence during pregnancy:

"Take one second, one minute, one hour, one day at a time. Doing nothing isn't an option when you're pregnant. Silence and self-blame will not help you. Reach out for support, you are not alone."

"I was a middle-class, educated woman, working full time in a school. I was living in my own home, financially independent and taking vitamin supplements throughout my pregnancy. However, I could not stop drinking alcohol throughout."

"I had a disease. I couldn't stop drinking. I needed someone to tell me it would be OK. No judgement, just understanding and support. There are places to go to get help, it isn't too late."

"If someone had sat down with me and given me the cold hard facts and explained to me how alcohol could harm my baby, I would have given up sooner."

"No one wants to grow up to be alcohol dependent. I am university educated, I found myself self-medicating to cope with grief and trauma, I believed I couldn't fall pregnant without medical intervention."

"Women need not feel shame or blame in disclosing alcohol use during their pregnancy in order to get help for their children. Any women who are physically dependent on alcohol also need not feel shame in disclosing this as there is help and support available."