

The facts about Alcohol and Pregnancy

Canada's Low Risk Alcohol Drinking Guideline for Pregnancy

If you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant, the safest choice is to drink no alcohol at all.

Key Points

- There is no amount of alcohol that is known to be safe during pregnancy.
- There is no time during pregnancy when it is safe to drink alcohol.
- Alcohol can affect your baby in ways that may last a lifetime.

1 Alcohol can cause your baby a lifetime of physical, mental, learning and behaviour problems.

Using alcohol during pregnancy can cause a range of problems for your baby called Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). FASD can affect your child's body, mind and behaviour. It can also cause learning challenges.

A child with FASD has difficulties with language, poor impulse control, and problems paying

attention and using good judgment. These issues can affect success in school and all other areas of life.

Being exposed to alcohol also increases the risk that your baby will have a birth defect.

2 It is safest not to drink any alcohol during pregnancy.

The risks to your baby are greatest if you drink heavily while pregnant. However, researchers have not been able to find any level of alcohol use that is safe during pregnancy.

Studies suggest that even low to moderate alcohol use at any time during pregnancy may

increase the risk of miscarriage and of long-term problems for your child. For example, your child may grow more slowly during the first year of life and may have learning and behaviour problems.

For more information...

- If you want more information, or if you need some extra support, talk to a health care provider. This could be your doctor or a nurse. You could also visit your local family resource center.
- If you have concerns about how much you are drinking, contact your local Addiction Services office. To find the one nearest you, go to: <http://www.addictionservices.ns.ca/>