

Healthy Moms, Healthy Babies

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service • Oklahoma State University



Alcohol During Pregnancy

What happens to your baby when you drink alcohol such as beer, wine, or mixed drinks while you are pregnant? Any alcohol you drink is shared with your baby. Your baby faces the possibility of birth defects, mental retardation, and growth problems. Drinking alcohol while pregnant can cause your baby to be born with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS). Babies with FAS can be mentally retarded and often have abnormal facial features

Drinking alcohol increases the chances of miscarriage, stillbirth, birth defects, low birth weight, and death in early infancy. No amount of alcohol is safe to drink since even moderate drinking can harm your baby.



What Should You Do?

STOP drinking as soon as you think you may be pregnant. The best approach is to quit drinking before trying to conceive. Your baby's organs are already developing during the first month.

Just Say No! When friends pressure you to drink, try saying:

- No thanks, I'm driving.
- No thanks, I want to stay in control.
- No thanks, what else have you got?
- No thanks, I don't want to harm my unborn baby.

However you say it, the important thing is to commit yourself to not drinking during your pregnancy.

When You Can't Say No.... even without peer pressure, you may be addicted to alcohol. Talk with your doctor. Call the County Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse where counselors can help you. You can also get help from Alcoholics Anonymous, a support group.

Why take chances with the health of your baby which will affect him or her for life?

Suggested Readings:

Dairy Council of California (1990). *Pregnancy: A special time for nutrition and good health*. Sacramento, CA: Author.

March of Dimes. *Alcohol and pregnancy: Make the right choice*. White Plains, NY: Author.

March of Dimes. *Drinking during pregnancy information sheet*. White Plains, NY: Author.

Smith, P., and Coats C. (1988). *How to be perfectly pregnant*. Orlando, FL: Carolyn Coats' Bestsellers.

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March of Dimes. *Alcohol and Pregnancy: Make the right choice*. White Plains, NY: Author.

Alton, I. (1990). Substance use during pregnancy. In M. Story (Ed.) *Nutrition management of the pregnant adolescent* (pp. 97-105). Washington, DC: National Clearinghouse.

Eisenberg, Arlene, Murkoff, Heidi E., and Hathaway, Sandee. E. (1986) *What to eat when you're expecting*. New York: Workman Publishing Company, Inc.

Mills, J., Graubard, B., Harley, E., Rhoads, G., and Berendes, H. (1984). Maternal alcohol consumption and birth weight. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 252, 1875-1879.

Weiner, L., and Rosett, H. (1985). Pregnancy and alcohol. *Clinical Nutrition*, 4, 10-13.



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***For more information, contact your OSU
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