

IS IT SAFE TO DRINK IF I AM BREASTFEEDING?

When you're breastfeeding your baby, the alcohol you drink enters your breast milk and passes to your baby. This can affect your baby's growth and motor development.

It takes an hour for your body to rid itself of one standard drink. If you do enjoy a drink now and then, wait till after feeding your baby. Limit the amount of alcohol you drink if you are breastfeeding.



Remember that breastfeeding still provides the best, safest and most nutritious food for babies.

For more information or assistance, contact your:

- midwife or doctor
- antenatal clinic
- local alcohol and drug agency (look under 'alcohol' in the phone book)
- Alcohol and Drug Helpline 0800 787 797

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ALCOHOL *and* PREGNANCY

when

YOU

drink



so

does

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BABY

WHEN YOU DRINK, SO DOES YOUR BABY

When you are pregnant, every time you drink beer, wine or spirits, your baby is drinking the alcohol, too. All alcohol is carried by your bloodstream, through the placenta, to your baby, who will have the same blood alcohol level as you do.

Your unborn baby is not protected from alcohol.



HOW CAN ALCOHOL AFFECT MY BABY?

Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can increase the risk that your baby will have lifelong problems. There is a risk your baby will not grow properly or will be more difficult to look after. For example, they may have permanent learning, behavioural or social problems.

In the most severe situation, there is a risk your baby will be born with mental disability, an unusual face and other birth defects (Fetal Alcohol Syndrome).

There is no known safe level of alcohol use during pregnancy. The more you drink, the greater the risk that your baby will have these kinds of problems.



CAN I DRINK ANY ALCOHOL WHEN I AM PREGNANT?

Not all babies are affected the same way by alcohol, so there is no way of knowing how much is safe. Cutting out alcohol altogether avoids any possible harm.

There is also no safe time to drink during pregnancy. The risk of physical defects is greatest in the first three months, but your baby's growth, central nervous system and brain development can be affected by drinking at any stage of pregnancy.



WHAT IS THE BEST ADVICE?

The best advice is to stop drinking if you are pregnant or planning a pregnancy.

Think ahead. If there is a chance you could be pregnant or you want to get pregnant, try not to drink any alcohol to give your baby the best possible start.

If you think you are pregnant and have been drinking – don't panic. Stopping your drinking at any time during pregnancy will increase the chances that your baby will be born healthy. Talk to your midwife or doctor if you are concerned.

Your partner, family and friends can help by supporting your choice not to drink. It may be easier if they don't drink alcohol around you.

Find a non-alcoholic drink you like. When you go out, ask for a soft drink, a fruit juice or a lime and soda.

It is never too late to stop drinking during pregnancy.

If you can't stop drinking or are worried about your drinking, get help!