



### 5. What if I am pregnant and have been drinking?

If you drank alcohol before you knew you were pregnant or before you knew that alcohol could harm your baby, stop drinking now. Every day matters. The sooner you stop drinking, the better for your baby.

### 6. How can I stop drinking?

If it is hard for you to stop drinking, talk with your healthcare provider about getting help. There are a variety of treatments that can help you. Options for pregnant women include behavioral treatments and mutual-support groups. Your healthcare provider may be able to help you determine the best option for you.

Treatment is an ongoing process. Even if you have been through treatment before, don't give up.

## FOR HELP AND INFORMATION

You can get help from your doctor or other healthcare professionals, your religious adviser, a mutual-support group, or other support people.

### **National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)**

301-443-3860, <https://www.niaaa.nih.gov>

### **NIAAA Alcohol Treatment Navigator**

<https://alcoholtreatment.niaaa.nih.gov>

### **FASD United**

202-785-4585, <https://fasdunited.org/>

### **The Circle of Hope: A Mentoring Network for Birth Mothers**

<https://fasdunited.org/circle-of-hope/>

### **Recovering Mothers Anonymous**

<https://recoveringmothers.org>

### **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/fasd>

### **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's National Helpline**

1-800-662-HELP (1-800-662-4357)

<https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline>

### **MotherToBaby**

<https://mothertobaby.org>

### **American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists**

<https://www.acog.org/womens-health>

### **American Academy of Pediatrics**

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/chronic/Pages/Fetal-Alcohol-Spectrum-Disorders-FAQs-of-Parents-and-Families.aspx>

### **Indian Health Service**

<https://www.ihs.gov/womenshealth/maternalchildhealth/fasd/>



# ALCOHOL AND YOUR PREGNANCY


NIH Publication No. 21-AA-5610  
Updated August 2022



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
National Institutes of Health  
National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism



# PRENATAL ALCOHOL EXPOSURE...



...is associated with an increased risk of miscarriage, stillbirth, prematurity, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), as well as fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD).

FASD is a term for a range of lifelong conditions that can occur in individuals who were exposed to alcohol before birth and often lead to disability.

### Children with FASD are more likely to:

- Have low birthweight.
- Have problems eating and sleeping.
- Have problems with vision and hearing.
- Have trouble following directions and accomplishing everyday tasks.
- Have difficulty paying attention and learning in school.
- Have cognitive and academic problems and need special educational services.
- Have trouble controlling their behavior and getting along with others.
- Have behavioral and medical issues that can become apparent at different life stages.
- Be prone to develop alcohol and other substance use disorders later in life.
- Often need extra medical and behavioral care, assistance, and social support throughout life.

## HERE ARE SOME QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE ABOUT ALCOHOL AND DRINKING WHILE YOU ARE PREGNANT

### 1. Is it all right to drink alcohol if I am pregnant?

No. A developing baby is exposed to the same concentration of alcohol as the mother during pregnancy. There is no known safe amount of alcohol consumption for women who are pregnant, including early in pregnancy when a woman may not know that she is pregnant.

### 2. Are some kinds of alcohol less harmful than others?

No. Exposure to alcohol from all types of beverages—including beer, wine, hard seltzer, hard cider, alcopops, distilled spirits (liquor), and mixed drinks—is unsafe for developing babies at every stage of pregnancy. A glass of wine, a can of beer, and a shot of liquor all have about the same amount of alcohol. Cocktails (mixed drinks) may have twice as much alcohol as these other beverages.

### 3. What if I drank during my last pregnancy and my child was fine?

Every pregnancy is different. Alcohol exposure before birth may harm one child more than another. You could have one child born healthy and another child born with problems. Some intellectual and behavioral problems related to FASD may not be apparent initially and can appear at any time during childhood.

### 4. Does FASD have lifelong effects?

Yes. Although some of the lifelong effects of FASD can be recognized early, other issues become apparent later in life. While early diagnosis and treatment can improve the child's health and behavior, there is no cure for FASD currently.