

Alcohol and Pregnancy

Why am I being warned about alcohol and pregnancy?



- Ethyl alcohol in alcoholic beverages is on the [Proposition 65](#) list for [reproductive toxicity](#).
- Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can cause lifelong intellectual, behavioral, and physical harm to the baby, as well as miscarriage and stillbirth.

How can alcohol during pregnancy harm a developing baby?

During pregnancy, alcohol can pass from mother to baby. A woman who drinks alcohol during pregnancy can cause lifelong intellectual, behavioral, and physical harm to her baby. This includes:

- Problems with behavior, poor school performance, poor impulse control, and difficulties with math, memory, attention, judgment, communication, and getting along with others.
- Abnormal facial features and growth, and defects in the development of the heart, kidneys, or bones.
- Problems with the central nervous system, and with vision or hearing.

These conditions are called fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs), and can persist throughout the child's life.

How can this harm be prevented?

- A woman who is pregnant or might be pregnant should not drink alcohol.
- Most women do not know they are pregnant during the first four to six weeks of pregnancy, so a baby might be exposed to alcohol without the mother knowing it. A woman should not drink alcohol if there is any chance she might be pregnant.
- The baby's brain growth takes place throughout pregnancy, so a woman who continues to drink while pregnant may cause further harm to her baby.

Is any level of alcohol consumption safe during pregnancy?

- No. There is no known safe amount of alcohol to drink during pregnancy.
- All types of alcoholic beverages are harmful to the baby, including wine and beer.

What should a woman do about her alcohol use if she is pregnant or might become pregnant?

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) advises each woman of reproductive age to:

- Talk with her health care provider about her possible plans for pregnancy, her alcohol use, and ways to prevent pregnancy if she is not planning to become pregnant.
- Stop drinking alcohol if she is trying to become pregnant, or could become pregnant.
- Ask her partner, family members, and friends to support her decision not to drink alcohol during pregnancy, or while trying to become pregnant.
- Ask her health care provider or another trusted person about [resources for help](#) if she cannot stop drinking alcohol on her own.

For more information:

General Fact Sheets and Resources

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
 - ▶ About Alcohol Use and Pregnancy
<https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol-pregnancy/about/index.html>
 - ▶ Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASDs)
<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/fasd/index.html>
- American Academy of Pediatrics
 - ▶ Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders: FAQs of Parents & Families
<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/chronic/Pages/Fetal-Alcohol-Spectrum-Disorders-FAQs-of-Parents-and-Families.aspx>
- California Department of Public Health
Substance and Addiction Prevention Branch
 - ▶ Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASDs)
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDPHP/sapb/Pages/FASDs.aspx>
- California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA)
Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA)
 - ▶ Alcohol and Cancer
<https://www.p65warnings.ca.gov/fact-sheets/alcohol-and-cancer>

Proposition 65

- California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA)
Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA)
 - ▶ Proposition 65: Background
<https://www.p65warnings.ca.gov/faq>
 - ▶ Proposition 65: The List of Chemicals
<https://www.p65warnings.ca.gov/chemicals>
 - ▶ Proposition 65: Fact Sheets
<https://www.p65warnings.ca.gov/fact-sheets>