



# 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>