

"People show a broad range of effects. We don't expect to see everybody having the exact same problem. It depends on the timing and the dose of alcohol exposure. And it depends on a lot of other maternal and genetic factors too."-Paul Connor, PhD. Research Affiliate, Fetal Alcohol and Drug Units, University of Washington.

Tips for Giving up Alcohol

Stopping drinking can be hard. Even if you have tried before, don't give up. There are people that are willing to help you. You should never feel embarrassed or ashamed to ask for help. Everyone needs help sometime.

*Avoid situations where you usually drink, such as parties or bars.

*Ask your partner, family and friends to help you stay away from alcohol.

*Find other activities to get involved with.

*Talk to your healthcare provider if you are experiencing depression, anxiety, worry or other thoughts that are causing you to drink.

For More Information

Allegheny County SBIRT Project- Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral and Treatment

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Suite 200B
Pittsburgh, PA 15220
412-253-1260

This information was gathered from the following sources:

FASD Informational Resources

SAMHSA's FASD Center for Excellence
1-866-STOPFAS(786-7327)

www.fasdcenter.samhsa.gov

NCADI: SAMHSA's National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information

1-800-729-6686

<http://www.ncadi.samhsa.gov>.

NIAAA: National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

www.niaaa.nih.gov

National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (NOFAS)

1-866-66-NOFAS

Email: information@nofas.org

www.nofas.org

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Alcohol Use and Your Pregnancy



Allegheny County SBIRT Project

Should I drink during pregnancy?

A pregnant woman's unborn child drinks everything she drinks. When a pregnant woman drinks alcohol, it enters her bloodstream then passes through the umbilical cord to the growing baby.

Alcohol use can harm a baby at any time during pregnancy, including the early weeks, when most women do not even realize they are pregnant. About half of all pregnancies in the United States are unplanned. Any woman that may become pregnant should talk with her healthcare provider about the steps to take to reduce the chance of exposing her baby to alcohol.

No one knows exactly how much alcohol a woman has to drink to cause birth defect in her baby. That level may differ from woman to woman.

Even occasional binge drinking can be risky, as well as moderate or light drinking. You don't have to be an alcoholic to put your baby at risk. All types of alcohol: beer, wine, wine coolers, and liquor are equally risky. A mother's alcohol use during pregnancy is one of the top preventable causes of birth defects and developmental disabilities. The most serious problems that come from drinking during pregnancy are known as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) which includes Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS).

What is FAS and FASD?

FASD is a term for the range of effects that can occur when a mother drinks alcohol during her pregnancy. These effects may include physical, mental, behavioral and learning disabilities.

FASD's can cause problems in how a person looks, grows, thinks and acts.

Problems that may occur if you drink while pregnant:

- Premature birth
- Low birth weight
- Facial abnormalities
- Growth retardation
- Brain damage-reduced brain size, intellectual difficulties and behavioral problems
- Motor skills problems
- Hyperactivity
- Memory, attention and judgment problems
- Language problems
- Difficulty in school
- Hearing and vision problems

Richard H. Carmona, the U.S. Surgeon General wants women to know that they should not consume any alcohol during pregnancy. He cautions pregnant women and women that may become pregnant to avoid alcohol to keep their babies free from the harmful effects of prenatal alcohol exposure.

"My Friend drank during her pregnancy and her baby is fine..."

FASD may not be apparent at birth and may not be noticeable until grade school. A lot of babies exposed to alcohol before birth do not have full-blown Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS). Still they can have many problems. There may be visual signs, such as changes in their faces, smaller heads and shorter statures. Brain damage is the most serious effect, which is not visible. Because scientists do not know how much alcohol it takes to cause alcohol related birth defect, it is best to not drink any alcohol during pregnancy.

What Do I Do If I Have Been Drinking?

It's never too late. Even if you have been drinking during your pregnancy, it is best to stop now. Please speak with the Healthcare Specialist or healthcare provider. There is no need to feel ashamed, quitting drinking may be difficult, but there are people that are willing to help you in a friendly, compassionate way. Everything will be completely confidential.