

ALCOHOL



ALCOHOL + PREGNANCY

“Alcohol can interfere with the normal growth of a fetus and cause birth defects. When a woman drinks during pregnancy, her fetus can develop lifelong problems. It is safest not to drink at all while you are pregnant. There is no safe amount or type of alcohol use during pregnancy. Even moderate drinking (one drink a day) can cause lifelong problems for your baby.”

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG)

Drinking alcohol while pregnant may increase the chance of **miscarriage** or **stillbirth**.¹ Pregnant people who drink a lot of alcohol during pregnancy are at higher risk of having a baby with symptoms of **Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)**.^{1, 2}

These include characteristic facial features, smaller head size, lower birth weight, and intellectual disabilities.

No one knows exactly how much alcohol is safe to drink during pregnancy and it is probably different for each person.

Not every person who consumes alcohol during pregnancy will give birth to a child with signs of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

Long-term studies of children with alcohol exposure suggest that binge drinking or severe alcohol use disorder may be associated with behavior problems. Studies of low to moderate drinking have not found a universally negative impact.³

Some of the **potentially permanent effects of FASD** include organ defects and limitations in thinking, reasoning, and learning.

ALCOHOL + LACTATION

Alcohol passes into human milk and is absorbed by babies if they drink that milk.^{4,5} **If you have plans that may include alcohol consumption, pump and store enough milk beforehand to feed your baby a couple of feedings - or plan to use formula.**

While intoxicated, if your breasts become painful or engorged, pump or hand express enough milk to relieve the pressure.

Recommendations for the time it takes for your milk to be safe for the baby start at **2 hours per drink.**^{4,5}

If you are only going to have one standard drink, it is ok to feed the baby, have a drink, wait a few hours, and feed baby again without doing anything special.



If you still feel drunk or hungover - even after the recommended time has passed - wait until you feel better before providing your milk to your baby. If you want to be 100% sure your milk is safe, you can use **alcohol test strips** for breast milk that are available in drugstores.

ONE SERVING OF ALCOHOL



12 oz
BEER



8-9 oz
MALT LIQUOR



5 oz
WINE








1-2 oz
LIQUOR



What treatment options are available for people with alcohol use disorder who are pregnant?

There are many approaches to treatment for people who want to **change their drinking** or **stop drinking** completely.

A few common ways are:

- attending meetings such as [SMART Recovery](#)  or other free community meetings such as [Moderation Management](#),  [Harm Reduction for Alcohol \(HAMS\)](#),  or [Alcoholics Anonymous \(AA\)](#) 
- group therapy, individual counseling, hypnotherapy, or the support of a Recovery Community Organization (RCO) michiganarco.org 
- using medications prescribed by a doctor to treat cravings

The medications available for the treatment of alcohol dependence are naltrexone tablets or injections (Vivitrol®), acamprosate (Campral®), disulfiram (Antabuse®) and gabapentin (Neurontin®).

We don't have good information on how safe these medications are during pregnancy, but they are likely to be much **safer than continuing to drink**.

Consult with a provider before taking any of these medications while pregnant.

ALCOHOL WITHDRAWAL

In some cases alcohol dependency and withdrawal are associated with serious complications like seizures.

If you are alcohol-dependent and are trying to decrease your alcohol consumption, don't quit "cold turkey." Work with a medical provider, especially if you have had seizures before.

In rare cases, alcohol detox can lead to lethal complications. Ask for help.



RESOURCES AND TOOLS



Sunnyside: Alcohol Tracker app

Sunnyside is a free alcohol tracking, planning, and coaching app focused on mindful drinking and moderation, not sobriety. It can help you reframe your relationship to alcohol by helping you set your goals around alcohol use, make a personal plan, track your drinking, and get support.

www.sunnyside.co

Moderation Management (MM)



Moderation Management is a not-for-profit alternative to 12-step groups offering advice and support to those seeking to limit, moderate, or abstain from alcohol usage.

www.moderation.org

ReThinking Drinking



A website by the National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

www.rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov

What are Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD)



from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services

michigan.gov/mdhhs/adult-child-serv/childrenfamilies/familyhealth/fetalalcohol

NOTES:
