

STOP DRINKING WHEN YOU START TRYING.



# Why Take the Risk?

## and PREGNANCY:

# ALCOHOL

### Helpful Resources

The organizations and resources below can provide you with more information on FASDs, drinking and pregnancy, and how to get help if you are pregnant or trying to get pregnant and cannot stop drinking.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities  
[www.cdc.gov/fasd](http://www.cdc.gov/fasd) or call 800-CDC-INFO

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) FASD Center for Excellence  
[www.fasdcenter.samhsa.gov](http://www.fasdcenter.samhsa.gov)

National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (NOFAS)  
[www.nofas.org](http://www.nofas.org) or call 800-66-NOFAS (66327)

National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD) [www.ncadd.org](http://www.ncadd.org) or call 800-NCA-CALL (622-2255)

Substance Abuse Treatment Facility Locator, [www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov](http://www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov) or call 800-622-HELP (4357)

Alcoholics Anonymous [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)

March of Dimes [www.marchofdimes.com](http://www.marchofdimes.com)

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism [www.niaaa.nih.gov](http://www.niaaa.nih.gov)



National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (NOFAS) 2009. Adapted from Moore, 1993

Period of development when functional defects and minor structural defects can occur.

Period of development when major defects in bodily structure can occur.

PERIOD OF THE OVUM	PERIOD OF THE EMBRYO	PERIOD OF THE FETUS
Weeks 1-2	Week 3	Weeks 20-36
	Week 4	Week 16
	Week 5	Week 12
	Week 6	Week 8
	Week 7	Week 7
	Week 8	Week 8
		Week 12
		Week 16
		Week 20-36
		Week 38

Organ/Structure	Development Period (Embryo/Fetus)
Heart	Weeks 3-8
Arms/Legs	Weeks 4-8
Eyes	Weeks 5-8
Teeth	Weeks 6-16
Palate	Weeks 6-16
External Genitalia	Weeks 8-16
Ears	Weeks 8-16

• = Most common site of birth defects

This chart shows vulnerability of the fetus to defects throughout pregnancy.

# FETAL DEVELOPMENT CHART








## What are FASDs?

- Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can cause a range of birth defects including physical and intellectual disabilities that can last a lifetime. These problems are known as fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs).
- You might have heard of fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) which is one condition under the FASD spectrum. A baby born with FAS has a small head, weighs less than other babies and has distinct facial features.
- Some of the behavioral and intellectual disabilities for people with FASDs include:
  - learning disabilities
  - hyperactivity
  - difficulty paying attention
  - speech and language delays
  - low IQ
  - poor reasoning and judgment skills
- People born with FASDs can also have problems with their organs including the heart and kidneys.

## Are some types of alcohol, such as red wine, safer to drink during pregnancy than others?

- Drinking any type of alcohol can affect your baby's growth and development and cause FASDs.
- Red wine is no safer than white wine, beer or mixed drinks.
- A 4-ounce glass of red or white wine has the same amount of alcohol as a 12-ounce can of beer or a 1-ounce shot of straight liquor.
- Some drinks, like mixed alcoholic drinks or malt liquor drinks, may have more alcohol in them than a 12-ounce can of beer.

### U.S. STANDARD DRINK EQUIVALENTS

12 oz. of beer or cooler	8-9 oz. of malt liquor	5 oz. of table wine	3-4 oz. of fortified wine	2-3 oz. of cordial liqueur, or aperitif	1.5 oz. of brandy	1.5 oz. of spirits
	8.5 oz. shown in a 12-oz. glass that if full, would hold about 1.5 standard drinks of malt liquor		(such as sherry or port) 3.5 oz. shown	2.5 oz. shown	(a single jigger)	(a single jigger of 80-proof gin, vodka, whiskey, etc.) Shown straight and in a highball glass with ice to show a level
						
12 oz.	8.5 oz.	5 oz.	3.5 oz.	2.5 oz.	1.5 oz.	1.5 oz.

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)

## Is it okay to drink a little during pregnancy? Are there some times during pregnancy that are safer than other times to drink?

- There is no guaranteed safe level of alcohol use during your pregnancy or when you are trying to get pregnant.
- There is also no safe time to drink when you are pregnant. Alcohol can cause problems for your unborn baby throughout your pregnancy, including before you know you are pregnant.

## Is it okay to drink alcohol if I am trying to get pregnant?

- You might be pregnant and not know it yet. You probably won't know you are pregnant for up to 4 to 6 weeks. This means you might be drinking and expose your developing baby to alcohol without meaning to.
- The best advice is to stop drinking when you start trying to get pregnant.

## What causes FASDs?

- Alcohol in the mother's blood passes to the baby through the umbilical cord so when a pregnant woman drinks alcohol, her developing baby also drinks.
- Since every pregnancy is different, drinking alcohol may hurt one baby more than another.
- The baby's brain, body and organs are developing throughout pregnancy and can be affected by exposure to alcohol at any time.

“In over twenty years of working on FASD prevention, I have never met a mom who intentionally wanted to harm her unborn baby. Either she didn't know that alcohol was harmful during pregnancy or she needed help to stop drinking.”

- Kathy Mitchell

Vice President and National Spokesperson  
National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (NOFAS)

## Why should I worry about alcohol use if I am not pregnant and not trying to get pregnant?

- If you drink alcohol and do not use birth control when you have sex, you might get pregnant and expose your baby to alcohol before you know you are pregnant.
- Nearly half of all pregnancies in the United States are unplanned. And, many women do not know they are pregnant right away. So, if you are not trying to get pregnant but you are having sex, use birth control consistently.

## What if I drank before I knew I was pregnant?

- Make sure you get regular prenatal checkups. Tell your healthcare provider you have been drinking and ask for advice.
- Remember, it is never too late to stop drinking. Since brain growth takes place throughout pregnancy, the sooner you stop drinking the safer it will be for you and your baby.

## If I drank when I was pregnant does that mean my baby will have an FASD?

- Every pregnancy is different and alcohol can affect unborn babies in different ways. Some problems are more obvious than others and some children show more effects than others.
- If you drank any amount of alcohol while you were pregnant, talk with your child's health care provider as soon as possible and share your concerns.
- You may not know right away if your child has been affected. FASDs include a range of physical and intellectual disabilities that are not always easy to identify when a child is a newborn. Some of these effects may not be known until your child is in school.
- There is no cure for FASDs. However, identifying children with these conditions as early as possible can help them to reach their full potential.

The best choice is not to drink at all when you are pregnant or trying to get pregnant.