

ALCOHOL

How It Affects Your Baby



It's never a good idea to use any substances during your pregnancy unless they are prescribed and monitored by your health care provider. Any drug that you take passes through the umbilical cord and into your baby's body.

Drinking alcohol during your pregnancy is especially dangerous and can lead to serious, long-term health complications for your baby. Any kind of alcohol, including beer, wine, wine coolers, mixed drinks, or liquor can harm your baby.

If you drink alcohol during your pregnancy, your baby may experience any of the following:

- Low birth weight
- Central nervous system effects
- Irregularities of the face
- Poor growth and lack of weight gain
- Mental retardation
- Small head size
- Developmental delays
- Hyperactivity
- Speech/language deficits
- Behavior problems
- Need for special medical care

Alcohol use during pregnancy is the #1 preventable cause of mental retardation in children.

Drinking alcohol increases the chances of miscarriage and stillbirths.

Research has shown that even small amounts of alcohol can increase the risk of birth defects. The safest choice is not to drink any alcohol during your pregnancy. It is best to stop drinking before you try to become pregnant since the baby could be affected before you even know you are pregnant.

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) can result from alcohol use during pregnancy. It is characterized by poor growth, abnormal facial features including a flattened midface, low set ears, thin upper lip, a receding jaw, and damage to the central nervous system which can include mental retardation and vision and hearing problems.

The good news is:

It is never too late to stop drinking alcohol during your pregnancy! No matter how far along you are in your pregnancy, it is better for your baby if you quit. The baby's brain and body will grow better if you stop drinking alcohol.

Talk to your health care provider. Ask for help. Start living healthier for you and your baby today!



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