

You are having a baby.  
What an exciting time!

**Every day you learn more about what you need to do to take care of your body and your developing baby.**

You may have heard that it's okay to have a glass of wine or one beer now and then when you're pregnant. Or that champagne is good for you. Or that you can drink safely in the first trimester.

Alcohol is NOT safe  
for your baby!

**Your drinking – even a little now and then – can cause lifelong problems for your child.**

So, what is fact and what is fiction when it comes to drinking alcohol while you're pregnant? We'll help you sort it out.

[www.prevention.org](http://www.prevention.org)

## It's Only Nine Months

STOP Don't drink while pregnant! STOP

**How much is safe to drink when you're pregnant?**

**None! There is NO known safe amount.** The safest thing for your baby is not to drink alcohol at all. It's only nine months. You can do it!

*I heard that it's safer to drink alcohol in the first few weeks of pregnancy and then it's OK again in the last few weeks because the baby is fully formed by then.* **There is NO safe time to drink alcohol.** Babies are developing the entire nine months, so alcohol can affect them at any time.

*My sister had a few drinks when she was pregnant and her kids are fine. So I should be able to drink and be OK, too, right?* Women's bodies' process alcohol at different rates, so one woman may be able to drink more than another woman with fewer negative effects to the fetus. Since there is no reliable way of testing for this, there are no guarantees that your baby won't be harmed.

*What about non-alcoholic beer? That's safe right?* Believe it or not, non-alcoholic beer can contain a small amount of alcohol! Even small amounts can harm your baby. It's best to find something else that you enjoy for these nine months.

*My doctor said it's OK to have an alcoholic drink now and then.* Doctors often give differing medical advice – What kind of prenatal vitamins to take. What to eat. How much weight to gain. It is up to you to make informed choices for your baby.

The lifelong health of your child is at risk if you drink alcohol. The best thing for your baby is to make other beverage choices right now.

*What should I tell my friends when they offer me a drink?* No thanks. I am pregnant and there is no known safe level of drinking during pregnancy. I know you want me to have a healthy baby.

*I have a wedding to go to. You mean I can't have a glass of wine to celebrate? I heard wine or Champagne is good for a woman's blood during pregnancy.* You may hear many ideas about what is good for you when you are pregnant. But alcohol is not safe for your baby. Choose something non-alcoholic to celebrate special occasions. Do what's best for your baby!

*I drank a lot before I knew I was pregnant. Is it too late to stop drinking because the harm has already been done to my baby?* It is never too late. The sooner you stop the better it will be for your baby. Be sure to tell your doctor and your baby's pediatrician.



The U.S. Surgeon General in 2005 warned “pregnant women and women who may become pregnant to abstain from alcohol consumption in order to eliminate the chance of giving birth to a baby with any of the harmful effects of the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD),” adding, “Alcohol-related birth defects are completely preventable.”

## It's Only Nine Months

**STOP Don't drink while pregnant! STOP**

**You wouldn't put alcohol in your baby's bottle. When you drink while pregnant, your baby drinks.**

**Babies exposed to alcohol can suffer from:**

- Heart defects
- Permanent brain damage
- Behavior problems
- Stunted growth
- Facial deformities

You can prevent this lifelong damage by doing one simple thing –

**Don't drink while pregnant.**

**Give your baby the best chance at a healthy life.**

**Make sure your family and friends know the facts about drinking during pregnancy.**

For more information and helpful Web sites visit [www.prevention.org](http://www.prevention.org).

If you or someone you care about needs help to stop drinking, visit [www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov](http://www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov) for the nearest alcohol and drug treatment center.

### Who We Are

Prevention First is an Illinois nonprofit organization specializing in drug abuse prevention and its related issues since 1980. We collaborate with the foremost state and national authorities on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD). Since 2008, we have provided training on the FASD Screening and Brief Intervention for Pregnant women to Illinois WIC Health Professionals.

  
**PREVENTION FIRST**  
*Building community capacity to prevent substance abuse*




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**Don't Drink While Pregnant**

**It's Only Nine Months**



**The facts about alcohol & your baby.**