



## Pregnancy & alcohol

**It is best not to drink  
any alcohol at any time  
during your pregnancy.**

**best start  
meilleur départ**

by/par health **nexus** santé

*A woman is closest to the  
Creator when she is pregnant.  
It is when her medicine is  
most powerful. She sustains  
and nurtures life completely  
within her own body.*

— Traditional Mohawk Teaching

We all want what's best for our children. Deciding not to drink when you're pregnant is best for you and your baby.

Remember, no amount of alcohol is safe during pregnancy and there is no safe time to drink. Binge drinking and heavy drinking are especially harmful to the unborn baby.



### **Why is it important for a woman not to drink alcohol when she's pregnant?**

Drinking alcohol when you are pregnant can cause permanent birth defects and brain injury to your unborn child. Your child will not outgrow the disability caused by drinking alcohol.

In traditional teachings, the partner is also pregnant and should not drink alcohol. The partner and family play an important role by asking how they can help and by supporting the pregnant woman to make healthy choices. If a partner drinks alcohol it may harm the baby in ways that are not fully known, but will not cause Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

## FASD – Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

This is the term used to describe the types of harm to the unborn baby caused by alcohol use in pregnancy. These disabilities will not disappear as the child grows.

They may include:

- difficulty learning and remembering
- difficulty thinking things through
- difficulty focussing on a task
- difficulty getting along with other people, including family members
- difficulty with hearing and with seeing
- problems with bone, arm, leg and finger growth
- slow growth overall
- damage to the heart, kidney and liver

*With thanks to the LCBO for its support in developing and producing this brochure.*



### I want to stop but....

For many women, the support of partners, family and friends is all they need to not drink while pregnant.

Sometimes though, it is difficult for a woman to stop. Even though she wants what's best for her unborn baby, it can be a struggle to avoid alcohol.

**Remember: You aren't alone and there are places to go for help and support.**

National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program Treatment Centre Directory – Provides information on treatment centre's that accept pregnant women.  
[www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/substan/ads/nnadap-pnlaada\\_dir-rep-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/substan/ads/nnadap-pnlaada_dir-rep-eng.php)

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**Are you worried about your baby,  
or about someone you know?  
Do you want help to stop drinking?**

### Contact:

- Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres (**toll-free 1-800-772-9291**) They can refer you for local help and programs.
- The Ministry of Community and Social Services has listings for the Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy programs, Aboriginal Health Access Centres and resources. [www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/en/mcsc/programs/community/ahws/index.aspx](http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/en/mcsc/programs/community/ahws/index.aspx)
- Motherisk (**toll-free 1-877-327-4636**)
- Telehealth Ontario (**toll-free 1-866-797-0000**)
- Your doctor, local community health care provider, midwife or nurse
- Your local health unit

**For more information visit:  
[www.alcoholfreepregnancy.ca](http://www.alcoholfreepregnancy.ca)**

