

## Pregnancy

### Alcohol should be avoided during pregnancy – even in small quantities

Pregnant women should either not drink alcohol, or seek medical advice before they do, as there is currently no consensus on how much alcohol is safe for a pregnant woman to consume before causing risk to a foetus.

When a woman drinks alcohol during pregnancy, it is carried through her bloodstream, through the placenta and into the foetal blood.

This can affect the development of the foetus and cause Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). FASD refers to a broad range of birth defects, including Foetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS).

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People with FAS may have facial abnormalities, growth retardation and/or brain damage.

Other birth defects associated with drinking during pregnancy include heart and kidney defects, hearing and sight impairment, cleft lip, impaired brain development and central nervous system dysfunction.

There is strong scientific evidence that heavy drinking during pregnancy is associated with substantial risk of life-long physical and psychological harm to a child, including FAS. Heavy drinking is especially risky in the early stages of pregnancy but can present risk even during the second and third trimester.

Some studies have suggested that low levels of drinking during pregnancy may have no adverse effect on the foetus. However, medical science has not established what a safe level of alcohol consumption during pregnancy might be. Drinking alcohol at any stage during pregnancy can affect the brain development of the foetus.

Some studies have found that heavy drinking may be associated with infertility, particularly in women over the age of 30.

Heavy drinking by the father may also contribute to problems in their offspring, including cardiovascular defects, low birth weight and immune system problems.



#### take action

Talk to your doctor or health care professional before drinking during pregnancy.

#### talkingalcohol.com

is a site dedicated to helping people make informed choices about alcohol

#### other websites

These sites contain further information that you may find useful. However, SABMiller is not responsible for the content of these sites.

- National Health Service (UK), Pregnancy and Alcohol  
[www.nhs.uk/change4life/Pages/pregnancy-and-alcohol.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/change4life/Pages/pregnancy-and-alcohol.aspx)
- NIAAA (US), Drinking and Your Pregnancy  
[www.pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/fas/fas.htm](http://www.pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/fas/fas.htm)
- National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (US)  
[www.nofas.org/](http://www.nofas.org/)
- Network Action Team, Girls, Women, Alcohol and Pregnancy (Canada)  
[www.fasdprevention.wordpress.com/about/](http://www.fasdprevention.wordpress.com/about/)
- SANCA Western Cape (Africa), Foetal Alcohol Syndrome  
[www.sancawc.co.za/master/article.php?id=14](http://www.sancawc.co.za/master/article.php?id=14)
- The Center For Adoption Medicine, FASD Links  
[www.adoptmed.org/topics/fetal-alcohol-spectrum-links.html](http://www.adoptmed.org/topics/fetal-alcohol-spectrum-links.html)

