

Alcohol

your prescription for a healthy pregnancy and baby

Date

 / /

Name

If you are pregnant, considering pregnancy or breastfeeding, the best choice you can make for your baby is not to drink alcohol at all.

Alcohol consumption during pre-pregnancy and pregnancy:

I recommend that you: Drink no alcohol at all

If you choose to drink alcohol, I recommend that you:

- Take steps to stop drinking altogether
- Have no more than 2 drinks per day (spread over at least 2 hours), AND less than 7 standard drinks per week
- Have at least alcohol free days per week
- Read the written information provided
- Complete a drink diary for 2 weeks to bring to your next appointment

Alcohol consumption while breastfeeding:

Alcohol passes readily into breast milk. The safest option is to not drink at all.

I recommend that you: Drink no alcohol at all

If you choose to drink alcohol while breastfeeding, I recommend that you:

- Take steps to minimise drinking
- Have no more than 2 drinks per day (spread over at least 2 hours), AND less than 7 standard drinks per week
- Have at least alcohol free days per week
- Consume alcohol when it will have the least effect on the breast milk (i.e. drink only after the baby has been fed and settled). This allows several hours for alcohol levels to decrease before the next feed is due
- Express and store alcohol-free milk (prior to drinking) for later use
- Avoid breastfeeding for at least 3 hours after consuming alcohol
- Consume low-alcohol drinks
- Eat before and during consumption of alcohol

To assist you in managing your alcohol consumption I recommend:

I would like you to return for review in:

weeks

Signature

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Alcohol prescription

general guidelines

What is a standard drink?



Light beer
2.7% alc/vol.
Large glass 425mL
(schooner/pint)



Full-strength beer
4.9% alc/vol
Medium glass
285mL (middy/pot)



Wine
12% alc/vol
Glass 100 mL



Spirits
40% alc/vol
Nip 30 mL



Port/sherry
20% alc/vol
Glass 60 mL

- Note
- Serves of wine at most restaurants and bars are equivalent to almost 2 standard drinks
 - Two 375mL cans of full strength beer = 3 standard drinks

If you are planning a pregnancy, are pregnant or are breastfeeding, it is safest if you do not drink alcohol at all. Drinking alcohol may cause harm to your baby. At high levels it can also harm your health. There is no evidence for a safe level of drinking in pregnancy and breastfeeding.

Either stopping or drinking less alcohol at any time during your pregnancy will reduce the risk of harm to your baby.

It is important to tell your general practice team exactly how much you are drinking so they can check the health of you and your baby.

Benefits of stopping drinking include reduced risk of:

- alcohol crossing the placenta into your baby's bloodstream
- miscarriage, bleeding, premature birth and stillbirth
- Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). This can lead to learning difficulties, poor coordination, slow physical and mental development and defects of the face, heart and bones.

How you can reduce risks to your health and that of your baby:

- choose non-alcoholic drinks
- avoid salty snacks and drink water first if you are thirsty
- avoid drinking on an empty stomach—food helps slow down absorption of alcohol by your body
- shorten your time at social occasions where alcohol is available
- say no to top-ups so you can count your drinks
- be aware of how much alcohol is in your drinks
- have answers ready for those people who encourage you to drink.

Breastfeeding If you drink, breast milk will contain alcohol. This can:

- affect the development of your baby's brain
- affect your baby's ability to feed
- reduce the milk supply available for your baby.

Some ideas for saying no to alcohol when you are pregnant, planning to become pregnant or breastfeeding:

- No thanks—I'm driving
- No thanks—I'm pregnant
- No thanks—there's a baby on board
- No thanks—I'm breastfeeding

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