

## Alcohol and Pregnancy

Drinking alcohol when you are pregnant can hurt your baby.

### What is a teratogen?

Alcohol is a teratogen. A teratogen can cause a disability.

A teratogen harms your baby before she is born.

Your baby is joined to you by your umbilical cord and placenta. The placenta attaches to the uterus.

The umbilical cord comes out of the placenta.

The umbilical cord and placenta help move food, water, and oxygen from you to your baby. Anything that goes into your blood goes to your baby. This includes alcohol. Your baby's body takes longer to get rid of alcohol than your body does. This makes alcohol affect the baby longer.



## What is Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder?

Drinking alcohol when you are pregnant can cause a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). FASD affects a baby for his whole life. You may not notice FASD until your child is in school.

Alcohol can affect the brain, spinal cord, and organs (e.g., heart) of your baby. It can cause many disabilities.

It can affect:

- his size
- how he learns
- what he remembers
- how he pays attention
- how he fixes problems
- how he gets along with other people
- how he feels about himself
- how he sees
- how he hears

## When can alcohol cause harm to your baby?

Alcohol can hurt your baby at any time while you are pregnant. It is healthier for your baby if you don't drink while you are pregnant. If you stop drinking alcohol or cut down, your baby has a better chance to be born healthy.

**It is never too late to stop drinking.**

## Where can you get support?

Do you want to stop drinking? Talk to your healthcare providers. There are people who can help and support you.

You can call HealthLine at 811 and speak to an Addictions/Mental Health Counsellor. This is free and open 24 hours a day. You can also visit HealthLine Online at <http://healthline.gov.sk.ca/health-line>.

It is not easy to stop drinking alcohol. Drinking alcohol is common. It can be hard to tell people that you don't want to drink. Look for friends who can help you. You can be the designated driver. Your partner may stop drinking to support you.

