

## What will it be like for you to quit drinking?

Most women quit drinking alcohol when they find out they are pregnant.

For some it is easy; for others it is not as simple. If drinking alcohol is a habit for you, or it is hard to quit, you are not alone. Ask for support from:

- Your doctor or health care provider
- Addiction Services in your area
- Saskatchewan HealthLine 811

Your partner, family, friends, or co-workers can also help. Talk to them about how they can support you to avoid alcohol. There are ideas at [www.howtohelp.ca](http://www.howtohelp.ca).



## What if you are not ready to announce your pregnancy?

Some women turn down a drink by:

- saying, “No thanks,” and changing the subject
- saying, “I’m on medicine that shouldn’t be mixed with alcohol”
- having a decoy drink that looks like alcohol
- saying, “I’m the designated driver”

What will work for you?

### HELPFUL WEBSITES:

**Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC)**  
[www.sogc.org/alcohol-and-pregnancy](http://www.sogc.org/alcohol-and-pregnancy)

**Canada’s Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines**  
[www.ccsa.ca](http://www.ccsa.ca)

**Saskatchewan Prevention Institute**  
[www.howtohelp.ca](http://www.howtohelp.ca)  
[www.skprevention.ca](http://www.skprevention.ca)

### FOR REFERENCES OR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

**Saskatchewan Prevention Institute**  
1319 Colony Street, Saskatoon, SK S7N 2Z1  
Bus. 306-651-4300

# Pregnancy



# Alcohol

## A DOCTOR’S ADVICE



### **Dr. Jennifer Blake**

*CEO, Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC)*

Medical research confirms that drinking alcohol during pregnancy can harm an unborn baby.

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## What does the medical research say?

Evidence is clear that alcohol consumption during pregnancy can cause permanent damage. Depending on what is measured when children are being assessed, and the measurement process used, results are mixed regarding the impact of light drinking during pregnancy. Evidence is insufficient to determine a safe or a harmful level of alcohol use. In other words, no one knows for sure if it is safe for your developing baby to be exposed to any amount of alcohol.

**Researchers and doctors recommend abstinence from alcohol as the prudent choice for a woman who is or might become pregnant.**

The ***safest decision*** is to stop drinking completely so there is ZERO risk of exposing your unborn baby to alcohol.

**It's never too late to reduce the amount of alcohol you drink or to stop drinking completely. Every day without alcohol is a good day for your developing baby.**



## How does alcohol affect a developing baby?

When a pregnant woman drinks, the alcohol goes through the placenta and umbilical cord and reaches her unborn baby. Alcohol acts as a toxin to the baby's growing brain and body cells, changing cell shape, cell function, and how cells 'talk' to each other.

The effects of prenatal alcohol exposure are lifelong. Alcohol can cause permanent damage that will impact how a person learns, remembers, communicates, socializes, and manages school, work, and life.

All types of alcohol can harm your unborn baby (beer, wine, hard liquor, coolers, ciders).

- **74% of Canadian women drink alcohol.**
- **Approximately 50% of pregnancies are unplanned.**

*This means a woman might not know she is pregnant and might expose her developing baby to alcohol.*

Medical research shows that alcohol affects our bodies in many ways and confirms that drinking during pregnancy can harm an unborn baby.

In **Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines**, the recommended alcohol intake for pregnant women is ZERO.

## How can you protect your unborn baby from exposure to alcohol?

1. If you are sexually active, use effective birth control until you are ready to have a baby.
2. Quit drinking completely when you decide to try to get pregnant.
3. If you miss your period, quit drinking and get a pregnancy test.
4. Make the choice not to drink for all 9 months you are pregnant.

