

EASY HINTS & TIPS



It's best to avoid alcohol when trying for a baby and when you are pregnant. No alcohol, alcohol harm.

If you choose to drink alcohol before or after pregnancy and would like to drink less, or if you are the partner of someone who is pregnant and you want to cut down on how much you drink, the following tips can help.

- **Tell people you trust** about your decision.
- **Switch to non-alcoholic drinks** like alcohol free beer or wine, virgin cocktails or soft drinks.
- **Try some new social activities** that don't involve alcohol.
- **Take the car.** A perfect excuse to avoid drinking alcohol.
- **Plan what you are going to say** to people if they ask why you're not drinking.

If you choose to drink alcohol before or after pregnancy or if you are the partner of someone who is pregnant, it's best to stick within recommended low risk limits of no more than 14 units per week spread over a minimum of 3 days. You should also have at least 2 days in a row that are alcohol free each week.

- **Space your alcoholic drinks** with water or soft drinks in between.
- **Eat before and while you drink.** Food makes the body absorb alcohol more slowly so limits how quickly it gets into the bloodstream.
- **Be aware of your glass being topped up by other people,** especially when drinking at home.

Your midwife, health visitor or pharmacist will be happy to answer any questions you may have or provide additional support if you would like it.

BUT WHAT'S A UNIT?

A unit is a standard way of measuring how much alcohol is in any alcoholic drink. 30 years ago, this was quite straightforward as there wasn't as big a range of drinks on the market as there are today. The table below tells you how many units are in common drinks.

	2.3	175ml 13% strength red or white wine
	3.25	250ml 13% strength red or white wine
	9.75	750ml bottle of wine
	1.5	275ml bottle alcopops, 5.5% strength
	2.9	pint 5% strength beer or lager
	1.7	330ml bottle 5% strength beer or lager
	4	400ml can super strength beer or lager
	2.8	pint 5% strength cider
	1	35ml shot aftershock
	1.4	35ml pub measure (gin, vodka, whisky)



Remember there are other choices you can make about your lifestyle that can help you to have a healthy pregnancy.

For help and advice about healthy eating, exercise and stopping smoking as well as alcohol use, talk to your midwife, GP, pharmacist or health visitor.

You can get a copy of this leaflet in different formats such as large print, Braille, audio, easy read or in a community language, including British Sign Language on request.

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ALCOHOL BEFORE DURING & AFTER PREGNANCY



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FACTS ABOUT ALCOHOL & PREGNANCY

Women who are pregnant, or planning to be, often have questions about drinking alcohol at this time. This leaflet sets out to answer some of these questions.

Alcohol is widely consumed by the people of Scotland including those who live in Greater Glasgow & Clyde. When it is consumed within low risk limits it can be safely enjoyed. However, alcohol can affect you and your baby and this leaflet provides information and advice for women and their partners on low risk drinking levels when planning a baby, during pregnancy and while breastfeeding.

PLANNING A BABY

Drinking alcohol can affect your fertility.

For some people, drinking alcohol can make it more difficult to become pregnant and heavy drinking can also increase the chances of miscarriage during the early weeks. It is recommended that both men and women planning a baby should avoid drinking alcohol.

PREGNANCY

If a pregnant woman drinks alcohol, some of this passes on to her unborn baby.

If you have been drinking small amounts of alcohol during pregnancy, be reassured that the risk of harm to your baby is low.

However, it's never too late to stop. The sooner you stop drinking alcohol the better it will be for both you and your baby.



Important points

- Across the UK, Chief Medical Officers' guidance is to avoid alcohol completely if you are trying to conceive or are already pregnant.
- Alcohol can interfere with the baby's healthy growth and development.
- You should avoid drinking to excess or getting drunk.
- No alcohol, no alcohol harm.

BREASTFEEDING

Breastfeeding is best for your baby and you, but it doesn't mean that you can't have an occasional drink.

Alcohol passes from the mother's bloodstream into the breast milk in small amounts changing its smell and taste. This may affect the baby's feeding, sleeping or digestion patterns. With a little organisation and forward planning, breastfeeding Mums can enjoy time out for themselves.

If time out involves drinking alcohol then sticking to the recommended low risk drinking guidelines is best. If you drink more than this then it's better to express and store some milk beforehand. This can then be fed to the baby while you express and discard your milk for the next few feeds (depending on how much you've had to drink) to make sure no alcohol passes to the baby through your milk.

Advice on expressing and storing breast milk can be given by your midwife or health visitor.

FAMILIES

Everyone who is responsible for babies and young children should be aware of how alcohol can affect their ability to look after children.



Babies can be demanding at any time of the day or night and being under the influence of alcohol can affect your co-ordination, judgement and speed of reactions which can increase the risk of accidents. Having a hangover the next day can also make coping with the needs of a baby or young child difficult. So, if you are planning a night out, arrange for someone who is not drinking to look after your baby and/or children until your hangover has passed.

SAFETY TIPS

Remember even small amounts of alcohol can be poisonous to young children.

Alcohol should be kept well out of their reach and any leftovers should not be left lying around. Alcohol produces a much deeper sleep, so babies and children should not sleep in the same bed as anyone who has been drinking.

