

Alcohol and pregnancy.

The safest choice for your baby is for you to abstain from drinking alcohol.

Alcohol and fertility.

It's important to be in your best physical condition to increase the likelihood of conceiving and having a healthy baby. That includes considering how alcohol can affect your chance of conceiving.

Our reproductive systems can be impacted by alcohol and the effects can increase with the amount you drink.

What if you drank before you knew you were pregnant?

If you consumed alcohol before you knew you were pregnant, and have concerns, it's important to talk to your doctor, obstetrician or midwife.

Alcohol and breastfeeding.

The amount of alcohol in your blood is the same as the amount of alcohol in your breastmilk. It's therefore recommended that you should avoid drinking alcohol while breastfeeding.

What can you drink?

WATER is essential to keep you hydrated during your pregnancy. It is a key ingredient of healthy cells, an important part of breastmilk and essential for good lactation.

FRUIT MOCKTAILS are a great option when you are with friends at a party, pub or other social event.

TEA such as mint tea, served chilled with fresh, washed mint and raspberries is just one of many ways tea can work as an alcohol substitute.

A very important choice you can make for the health of your baby is to abstain from drinking alcohol while pregnant, planning a pregnancy or breastfeeding.

If you are pregnant and drink alcohol then so does your baby and that can cause harm.



VEGETABLE JUICES are another great alternative, especially if you're having trouble getting enough veggies in your diet. Cold vegetable juices are refreshing in summer and provide you and your baby with nutrients. Ensure your vegetables are well washed or choose pasteurised juices.

DrinkWise aims to inform and empower women to make healthy lifestyle choices.

Based on advice from the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), the safest option for women is to abstain from drinking if they are pregnant, planning a pregnancy or breastfeeding.

It's safest not to drink while pregnant.

Some effects of alcohol on your body.

YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM: Alcohol can suppress the immune system, particularly in long term or excessive drinkers making you susceptible to illness.

YOUR HEART: Long-term and excessive drinking can increase your risk of developing heart disease, high blood pressure, weakening of the heart muscle and heart failure.

YOUR BREASTS: Breast cancer is the most prevalent cancer among women. Studies indicate a relationship between alcohol consumption and the risk of developing breast cancer. Of course drinking alcohol does not mean you will automatically get breast cancer, but it does mean your risk of developing it will be increased. How much you drink over your lifetime is what increases the risk, therefore, you should stick to Australian national government drinking guidelines.

YOUR BABY: Prenatal alcohol exposure can cause Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). This is a term used to describe a range of conditions that result from brain damage caused by alcohol exposure before birth. Other effects of alcohol exposure during pregnancy can include miscarriage, still birth, premature birth and low birth weight.

YOUR REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM: Drinking excessive amounts of alcohol can affect a woman's menstrual cycle and ovulation. This may make it difficult to conceive a healthy baby. If you are planning a pregnancy, pregnant and/or breastfeeding you should avoid alcohol.



YOUR BRAIN: Alcohol slows down the central nervous system which, in turn, impacts almost all of the body's cells and systems. Alcohol misuse may cause alcohol-related brain impairment or brain injury.

YOUR SKIN: Alcohol dehydrates your body including skin – our largest organ. Over time, drinking heavily can have other, more permanent and detrimental effects on your skin.

YOUR LIVER: Regularly drinking to excess may result in a fatty liver which can affect this organ's important function. Continued excessive drinking may result in the liver becoming inflamed, causing alcoholic hepatitis or permanent liver scarring (cirrhosis) and subsequent liver cancer.

YOUR PANCREAS: Continuous and excessive drinking can lead to pancreatitis. This can lead to permanent pancreatic damage and increases the risk of pancreatic cancer.

YOUR KIDNEYS: Alcohol dehydrates you – meaning it makes you urinate more often. Drinking too much alcohol means that your kidneys have to work harder to remove toxins from your blood.

YOUR BOWEL: Alcohol may cause bowel irritation and may trigger symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome. Excessive drinking can increase the risk of colon cancer.

YOUR STOMACH: Alcohol may irritate the stomach lining which can bring on nausea, vomiting and sometimes diarrhoea. Long-term, excessive drinking has been associated with increased risk of upper gastrointestinal cancer including stomach cancer.