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1. Prenatal alcohol exposure is the leading cause of preventable birth defects in the United States.
 2. Prenatal alcohol exposure can cause fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD). FASD is a range of effects that can include physical, mental, behavioral, and learning disabilities.
 3. There is no known safe amount of alcohol to drink during pregnancy.
 4. There is no known safe type of alcohol to drink during pregnancy. All types of alcohol -- such as wine, hard liquor, and beer -- can cause irreversible effects to a developing fetus.
 5. There is no known safe time to drink alcohol during pregnancy. A fetus's brain is developing throughout the entire pregnancy, and brain injury can be caused by prenatal alcohol exposure during any trimester.
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PR%F Alliance

*Preventing fetal alcohol
spectrum disorders and
supporting all impacted.*

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**Drinking
alcohol
before &
during
pregnancy**

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Are you pregnant, or would you like to become pregnant in the next year?

Yes



No



Here are some tips for planning a healthy pregnancy:

- Talk to your health care provider. Discuss medications you take, vaccines you may need, and steps you can take to have a healthy pregnancy.
- Do not use alcohol, tobacco, or illicit drugs. Speak with your health care provider if you would like more information about the resources in your community that provide support for alcohol-free pregnancies.
- Take at least 400 mcg of folic acid each day. Folic acid is a B vitamin that can prevent major birth defects.
- Try to follow a healthy lifestyle, including eating nutritious foods, exercising appropriately, and getting plenty of sleep.

Speak with your health care provider about the different family planning options available to you. On average, couples who are sexually active but do not use birth control have an 85% chance of becoming pregnant; using contraception (birth control) will significantly reduce your chance of having an unintended pregnancy.

If you drink alcohol and do not use contraception when you are sexually active, you might become pregnant and expose the fetus to alcohol before you even know you are pregnant. This can cause irreversible birth defects and brain injury.



Unsure?

Talk with your health care provider about how to prepare for pregnancy and how to prevent it until you are sure you are ready. Even if you are not actively trying to become pregnant, following the recommendations for planning a healthy pregnancy can lead to a safer and healthier pregnancy if it does happen.

Sources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
National Institutes of Health | Guttmacher Institute
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

What if I drank before I knew I was pregnant?

Nearly 50% of pregnancies in the United States are unplanned, and many people do not know they are pregnant until at least 4-6 weeks after conception.

- The safest choice you can make is to stop drinking alcohol throughout the rest of your pregnancy. If you want additional support to help you quit drinking, talk to your health care provider. Resources and support are available.
- Tell your health care provider you had alcohol during your pregnancy. They should be able to address any questions or concerns you might have.
- Get regular prenatal checkups, if possible.
- Maximize your baby's health through lifestyle choices such as eating nutritious foods, managing stress, exercising appropriately, getting plenty of sleep, and not drinking alcohol throughout the rest of the pregnancy.