

Alcohol

Alcohol can hurt your baby. When you are pregnant, everything you drink reaches your baby. There is no safe amount of alcohol to drink when you are pregnant - even small amounts can greatly risk the health of your unborn child.

Q: What is alcohol?

Alcoholic beverages include a wide variety of drinks that are readily available. Some have higher alcoholic content than others, but none are safe to drink when you are pregnant.

They include:

- ▶ Beer
- ▶ Hard Liquor, such as Rum, Vodka, etc.
- ▶ Wine, Wine Coolers & Champagne
- ▶ Liqueurs, such as Kahlua, Irish Crème, etc.
- ▶ Mixed Drinks, such as Rum & Coke, etc.
- ▶ "Hard" Lemonade & Malt Beverages
- ▶ "Non-Alcoholic" Beer (*still contains alcohol*)

Q: How can alcohol harm my baby while I am pregnant?

When a pregnant woman drinks alcohol, the baby's blood absorbs the alcohol and carries it to the brain, causing damage that is permanent. Within minutes of drinking, a baby's blood alcohol level reaches that of its mother's, all while he or she is still being formed and developed in the womb.

If you drink anything alcoholic while you are pregnant, your baby could be born with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, sometimes called FAS for short. This disease causes mental retardation, abnormal facial features, heart defects as well as learning and behavioral problems. FAS is permanent.

Q: What kind of treatment is available?

For women who are struggling to stop drinking alcohol while they are pregnant, there are many excellent resources available in our community. For those who just need additional information, they can take educational classes. For others who feel a dependence upon alcohol, there are more intense treatment programs where help is provided in a confidential setting.

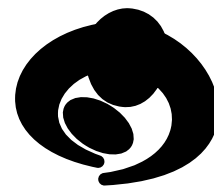
Q: How do I find more information and/or help?

**Zero Exposure Project
Toll Free: 1-877-233-5656**

**Alcoholics Anonymous
24-Hour Helpline: 1-800-993-3670**

The ZEP website provides valuable information and resources.

Visit www.zeroexposure.org.



ZERO Exposure Project

An Initiative of the Healthy Start Coalition of Hillsborough County, Inc.