

- Pregnancy and alcohol don't mix. When a pregnant woman drinks alcohol it is quickly absorbed into her bloodstream and passes through the placenta directly to the developing baby. Because of the baby's size and developing system, the alcohol can have lifelong devastating effects – causing brain damage and birth defects.
- There is no known safe level of alcohol consumption during pregnancy.
- All alcoholic drinks are harmful – a mixed drink, a wine cooler, a glass of wine or a bottle of beer – all contain alcohol.
- There is no safe time to drink alcohol during pregnancy. While most of the baby's organs develop during the first and second trimesters, brain development continues throughout pregnancy and even after birth.
- Exposure to alcohol at any time in the pregnancy can affect the baby's brain.
- It is safest for women who are, or may become pregnant, to abstain from alcohol.
- A recent study of 340 Ontario women aged 18 – 40 conducted by Environics Research Group¹, found:
 - that while there is widespread awareness of the dangers of drinking alcohol while pregnant, there is still some confusion about how much is safe and when it's safe to drink.
 - When asked in an open-ended question what important things pregnant women can do to increase the likelihood of having a healthy baby, alcohol consumption ranked third, behind nutrition and quitting smoking.
 - At least one third of the women surveyed felt that it is safe to consume some amount of alcohol while pregnant.
 - Ten percent of all women surveyed think that some kinds of alcohol are safe during pregnancy: beer and wine were considered the safest kinds of alcohol.
- Partners, families and friends of pregnant women, can support them and help them avoid drinking. Here are some tips to encourage an alcohol-free pregnancy:
 - Don't drink alcohol around pregnant women.
 - Have non-alcoholic drinks available at parties.
 - Get together in people's homes or at coffee shops rather than in bars.
 - Don't ever suggest that "just one little drink" will do no harm.
- It is never too late to stop drinking. Help is available. For more information on drinking and pregnancy, talk to your health care provider, call Motherisk 1-877-FAS-INFO (1-877-327-4636) or visit www.alcoholfreepregnancy.ca

¹The research was conducted April 7 through 26, 2004. Margin of error is +/- 5.3 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.
