

# Alcohol Use: After Pregnancy

What you can do to decrease risks for you, your baby and a future pregnancy



## Things to do **EVERY DAY** for healthy women and babies:

**Exercise** – 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week

**Vitamin** – 400 micrograms (mcg) of Folic Acid per day

**Educate yourself** about medicines and chemicals that can cause birth defects

**Reproductive life planning** – set your personal goals for birth control and future children

**Yearly doctor visits** to discuss physical and mental wellness

**Diet** – Vegetables, fruits, and whole grains daily

**Avoid tobacco, drugs, and alcohol**

**Your partner, friends, and family** should be sources of support

Content from everywomanalifornia.org with permission from the Preconception Health Council of California.



## Your health and your baby's health now

- It is important to avoid risky alcohol drinking for your health and the health of your baby.
- Risky drinking = 7 or more drinks per week, or more than 3 drinks at one time. All types of alcohol – even wine, wine coolers and beer – count as drinks.
- If you drink at risky levels, it may be hard for you to care for your baby. Also, drinking can increase the chance of you being injured, getting a sexually transmitted infection, or having an unplanned pregnancy.
- Alcohol can be passed on to your baby in your breastmilk. After drinking alcohol, wait for at least 2 hours per drink before you breastfeed your baby.
- If you drink at risky levels now, take steps to decrease the amount you drink. This may involve attending support meetings, finding ways to reduce stress, and avoiding the people and places that may cause you to drink too much.

## Alcohol use and future pregnancies

- Drinking any type of alcohol when you are pregnant can cause serious, lifelong problems for your baby. There is no known safe amount of alcohol or safe time to drink when you're pregnant, so do not drink if you are pregnant or think you might be pregnant.
- If you want to have another baby, stop drinking before you try to get pregnant. The harmful effects of alcohol on your baby can occur very early before you even know you are pregnant.
- If you're still drinking, don't take a chance on getting pregnant. Use effective birth control every time you have sex to prevent becoming pregnant. Talk to your provider about your options for birth control.
- If you get pregnant while you are still drinking, stop drinking immediately and see your health care provider. It's never too late to stop drinking and to help decrease the possible harmful effects of alcohol on your baby.

If you cannot stop or cut down on drinking alcohol on your own, ask for help from your provider, a treatment program, or self-help group. Don't give up – many people quit for good after trying one, two, three or more times.

## Remember your ABCs:

folic  cid

 reastfeeding

 ontraception

## For more information, go to:

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists:  
[acog.org/publications/faq/faq170.cfm](http://acog.org/publications/faq/faq170.cfm)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:  
[cdc.gov/ncbddd/fasd/index.html](http://cdc.gov/ncbddd/fasd/index.html)

Every Woman California:  
[everywomanalifornia.org/content.cfm?categoriesID=3](http://everywomanalifornia.org/content.cfm?categoriesID=3)

La Leche League International:  
[lalli.org/faq/alcohol.html](http://lalli.org/faq/alcohol.html)

March of Dimes:  
[marchofdimes.com/pregnancy/alcohol.html](http://marchofdimes.com/pregnancy/alcohol.html)

## Interconception Care Project for California

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