



# Pregnant? Think!

Fetal Alcohol  
Spectrum  
Disorders  
Prevention  
Handbook



# Don't Drink!

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, District II

# HELLO!

**The handbook you are holding could play a very important role in your life – and your health.**

Risky drinking of alcohol can harm your body and put your safety at risk. If you are pregnant or think you may become pregnant soon, you should not drink alcohol at all. Doing so could harm your unborn baby by causing Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders.

Many times women who drink a lot find themselves pregnant, abused or facing serious health problems. The goal of this handbook is to show you how to stay away from risky drinking.

As members of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, District II (ACOG), we are happy to provide you with this free handbook. Please turn to page 11 to complete a survey. Once you send it back to us, you will have a chance to win free women's health tools! See page 10 for details.

Please remember to visit your ob-gyn on a regular basis. If you would like more information about women's health, please visit our website: [www.acogny.org](http://www.acogny.org).

Sincerely,



Scott D. Hayworth, MD, FACOG  
Chair, ACOG District II



David Garry, DO, FACOG  
Chair, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Task Force

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*ACOG District II would like to thank the national office of ACOG for offering guidance throughout this initiative and allowing the use of materials from its toolkit: Drinking and Reproductive Health: A Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Prevention Tool Kit.*

## FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDERS TASK FORCE

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Compiled in April 2009

# WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT FASD

Adapted from: *FASD: What Everyone Should Know*. <http://www.nofas.org/resource/factsheet.aspx>.



**FASD is 100% preventable if women don't drink alcohol during pregnancy.**

**Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD)** is an umbrella term describing the range of effects that can occur in an individual whose mother drank alcohol during pregnancy. These effects may include physical, mental, behavioral, and/or learning disabilities with possible lifelong implications.

## **FASD includes conditions such as:**

- Fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS)
- Partial fetal alcohol syndrome (PFAS)
- Alcohol-related neurodevelopmental disorder (ARND)
- Alcohol-related birth defects (ARBD)

***FASD is 100% preventable if women don't drink alcohol during pregnancy.***

## **What are the effects of FASD?**

The effects of FASD vary among individual babies and children. Outcomes associated with FASD can include:

- Specific facial characteristics
- Growth deficits
- Mental retardation
- Heart, lung, and kidney defects
- Hyperactivity and memory problems
- Poor coordination or motor skill delays
- Difficulty with judgment and reasoning
- Learning disabilities

**“Of all the substances of abuse (including cocaine, heroin and marijuana), alcohol produces by far the most serious neurobehavioral effects in the fetus.”**

*Institute of Medicine, 1996*

## **How can FASD be prevented?**

While there is no cure for FASD, it is 100 percent preventable when pregnant women don't drink alcohol. It is important that all women of reproductive age see a women's health care provider once a year. If you have questions about FASD, ask your doctor.



# HOW MUCH ARE YOU REALLY DRINKING?

A standard drink in the United States is any drink that contains about 14 grams of pure alcohol (about 0.6 fluid ounces). Below are U.S. standard drink equivalents. These are approximate, since different brands and types of beverages vary in their actual alcohol content.



## BEER or COOLER

12 ounces is 5% alcohol

- 12 ounces = 1 standard drink



## TABLE WINE

5 ounces is 12% alcohol

- a 750 mL (25 ounces) bottle = 5 standard drinks



## 80-proof SPIRITS (hard liquor)

1.5 ounces is 40% alcohol

- a mixed drink = 1 or more standard drink(s)\*

\*Note: Depending on factors such as the type of spirits and the recipe, the amount of alcohol in one mixed drink can vary greatly.



## MALT LIQUOR

8–9 ounces is 7% alcohol

- 12 ounces = 1.5 standard drinks

Source: National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. A Pocket Guide for Alcohol Screening and Brief Intervention. 2005. Rockville, MD: National Institutes of health, 2005. Available at: [http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/Practitioner/PocketGuide/pocket\\_guide.htm](http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/Practitioner/PocketGuide/pocket_guide.htm).

Adapted from: The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. *Drinking and Reproductive Health: A Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Prevention Tool Kit*. 2006

## IF YOU'RE PREGNANT...

### Think about your baby's health – don't drink alcohol

- When you're pregnant, your unborn baby drinks what you drink. Alcohol goes into your bloodstream and reaches your baby.
- Drinking alcohol while you're pregnant may harm your unborn baby's brain, heart, kidneys, and other organs.
- Some unborn babies whose mothers drink alcohol develop fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS).
- Some children whose mothers drank alcohol during pregnancy have mental retardation, behavior and learning problems, and problems growing. These problems are serious and can be long-term.

### Stop drinking now

- There is no known safe amount of alcohol when you're pregnant, and there is no safe time to drink if you're pregnant.
- All types of alcohol—even wine, wine coolers, and beer—can harm your developing baby.
- Every pregnancy is different. Even if you had a healthy baby following a pregnancy when you drank, the baby you're carrying now could be harmed by alcohol.
- The risk of alcohol harming your baby increases as you get older.
- If you're pregnant and drinking, you can still help your unborn baby if you stop drinking now.
- Ask your health care provider for help. Together, you can develop a strategy for you to quit drinking.
- For immediate help, call New York's OASAS HOPEline: 1-877-8-HOPENY.

## STRATEGIES TO QUIT DRINKING

### What to say to others who offer you alcohol or expect you to drink

- Pat your tummy and say, "No thanks, I'm thinking about my baby."
- "No thanks, I'm pregnant and I'll pass."
- "I'll have a club soda with lime."
- Or just say, "No thanks," and change the subject.

### Staying social without drinking

- Stick around people who will help you avoid drinking. Ask them if they would not drink around you.
- Avoid risky places and situations. Stay away from bars and clubs. At parties, stay away from the drinks table. Stick with people who aren't drinking.

### Other helpful tips...

- If you smoke, quit. Cigarettes increase your craving to drink. Smoking is also dangerous for your developing baby.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Get some exercise: take a walk, dance, go for a swim.
- Keep stress away:
  - Take a long bath
  - Meditate
  - Take some deep breaths
- Be proud of yourself for doing all you can to have a healthy baby.

Adapted from: How to Have a Healthy Baby: Be an alcohol-free mother-to-be. <http://www.samhsa.gov>

Think Before you Drink. <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/fas/faspub.htm>.

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. *Drinking and Reproductive Health: A Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Prevention Tool Kit*. 2006

## IF YOU ARE NOT PLANNING TO GET PREGNANT...



**...Keeping up with the guys is not smart drinking.**

### **Take care of yourself—avoid risky drinking**

- Keep your drinking at no more than 7 drinks a week and no more than 3 drinks at any one time. Any more than this is risky drinking.
- All types of alcohol—even wine, wine coolers, and beer—count as drinks. Look at the chart of standard drinks on page 2—it may surprise you.
- Be a smart drinker. A woman's body is not able to tolerate as much alcohol as a man's body. Keeping up with the guys is not smart drinking.
- When you drink at risky levels, you increase the chance of being injured, getting a sexually transmitted infection, having an unplanned pregnancy, or being physically abused.

### **Drinking at risky levels**

- If you are unable to drink below risky levels, use effective birth control every time you have sex to avoid getting pregnant.
- Other helpful tips...
  - Limit your visits to risky places like bars and clubs.
  - At a party, stay away from the keg or drinks table.
  - Stay close to friends who don't drink at risky levels.
  - If you smoke, quit. Cigarettes increase your craving to drink.
- If you think you need more help, talk to your health care provider, or get in touch with a drinking specialist. You can find one online at: <http://dasis3.samhsa.gov>.
- If you need immediate help with an alcohol or substance abuse problem in New York State, call the OASAS HOPEline: 1-877-8-HOPENY.

Adapted from: The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.  
*Drinking and Reproductive Health: A Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Prevention Tool Kit*. 2006

# IS SOMEONE SPECIAL HAVING A BABY?

## Help the mother-to-be have a healthy baby

If you're a partner—or relative, or a special friend—and the mother-to-be drinks alcohol, you need to know a few facts:

- Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can cause serious problems for a developing baby. When a woman is pregnant, the unborn baby drinks what she drinks. Alcohol goes into her bloodstream and reaches the baby.
- All types of alcohol – even wine, wine coolers, and beer can harm a developing baby.
- Some children whose mothers drank while they were pregnant have mental retardation, behavior and learning problems, and problems growing. These are serious problems that can impact your child's entire life.

## Give good advice

Don't be afraid to talk to the pregnant mother: You can be more helpful than you think. Many women who know about the risks of drug use or smoking during pregnancy are not aware that alcohol can harm their babies. Here are some things you can do to help:

- Find a quiet place to sit and talk about having a healthy baby. Mention eating right, exercising, and not drinking.
- Remind her that her baby is exposed to any alcohol she drinks, and there is no known safe amount of alcohol during pregnancy.
- Alcohol use during pregnancy can lead to serious problems that can affect the baby for a lifetime.

- Tell her you know she wants what is best for her baby and encourage her: Tell her you'll stop drinking with her and commit to it.
- If the mother needs more help to stop drinking, help her find a doctor or treatment specialist. You can help her locate one online at: <http://dasis3.samhsa.gov>

## Plan activities together

You can help the mother-to-be enjoy her pregnancy by giving her support and sharing in activities that are good for her health and the health of her baby:

- When you are with her, avoid situations where drinking is common. Stay away from bars, clubs, and drinking parties.
- Help her say "no" when friends and family offer her drinks.
- Support her in situations when others tell her that it's OK to drink.

Spending time with the mother-to-be and letting her know that you care about her well-being is one of the best things you can do.

Adapted from: How to Help Your Family Member or Friend Be an Alcohol-free-Mother-to-be. <http://www.fascenter.samhsa.gov/whatsnew/bookletsPreventing.cfm>

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. *Drinking and Reproductive Health: A Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Prevention Tool Kit*. 2006



## BEFORE YOU GET PREGNANT...

### Take care of your own health

- If you have more than 7 drinks a week or more than 3 drinks on any one occasion, you may be putting your health at risk.
- Risky drinking can lead to injury, sexually transmitted infections, or an unwanted pregnancy.
- If you accidentally get pregnant, risky drinking can cause serious problems in a developing baby.
- It is important that all women of reproductive age see a women's health care provider once a year.



## PLAN TO HAVE A HEALTHY BABY—DON'T DRINK ALCOHOL

- Drinking when you're pregnant can cause serious health problems for a child.
- These problems can include brain damage, growth problems, mental retardation, or behavior problems.
- The best time to stop drinking is when you decide you want to have a baby.
- There is no known safe amount of alcohol when you're pregnant, and there is no safe time to drink if you're pregnant.
- All types of alcohol—even wine, wine coolers, and beer—may put your developing baby at risk for harm.

Adapted from: How to Have a Healthy Baby: Be an alcohol-free mother-to-be. [http://www.samhsa.gov/Think Before you Drink](http://www.samhsa.gov/Think%20Before%20you%20Drink). <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/fas/faspub.htm>.

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. *Drinking and Reproductive Health: A Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Prevention Tool Kit*. 2006

# IF YOU'RE STILL DRINKING...

## Don't get pregnant—use birth control

If you want to have a baby, the best time to stop drinking is before you get pregnant because you may be pregnant for several weeks before knowing it.

Don't take a chance. If you're still drinking, use birth control effectively every time you have intercourse and don't become pregnant.

## Talk to your doctor

- Work with your health care provider to set a goal for cutting down on drinking and eventually quitting.
- If you need extra help, your health care provider can arrange for you to visit a specialist.
- Even if you've tried to stop drinking before, try again. Don't give up. Many people quit for good after trying one, two, three, or more times.



Adapted from: How to Have a Healthy Baby: Be an alcohol-free mother-to-be. <http://www.samhsa.gov>

Think Before you Drink. <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/fas/faspub.htm>.

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. *Drinking and Reproductive Health: A Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Prevention Tool Kit*. 2006

# MY PLAN for Alcohol

**In the next 6 months, my plan for alcohol is:**

- Not to drink at all
- Not to drink above risky levels (no more than 3 drinks on any occasion and no more than 7 drinks per week)
- Limit my drinking to \_\_\_\_\_ drinks per occasion and \_\_\_\_\_ per week.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**This goal is important to me because:**

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**The steps I plan to take in reaching my goal are:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**The ways other people can help me are:**

Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Possible ways to help: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Some things that could interfere with my plan are:**

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**I will know that my plan is working if:**

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Adapted from: Project CHOICES, Am J Prev Med. 2002; 23:166-173

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. *Drinking and Reproductive Health: A Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Prevention Tool Kit*. 2006

# MY PLAN for Birth Control

**In the next 6 months, my plan for birth control is:**

- Not to use birth control
- To use birth control every time I have sex
- To use birth control and sexually transmitted infections control (condoms) every time I have sex
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**This goal is important to me because:**

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**The steps I plan to take in reaching my goal are:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**The ways other people can help me are:**

Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Possible ways to help: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Some things that could interfere with my plan are:**

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**I will know that my plan is working if:**

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Adapted from Project CHOICES, Am J Prev Med. 2002, 23: 166-173  
The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. *Drinking and Reproductive Health: A Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Prevention Tool Kit*. 2006

## ACT TODAY – DON'T DELAY:

***Enter to win a collection of tools that are free and full of ways to improve the health of women and babies!***

Complete the short survey on the next page and return it to ACOG District II. The first 500 people to return the survey will get free tools to help improve the health of women and babies!

***Don't delay: complete and submit your survey today!***

### **One of the many items you could win!**

#### *Planning Your Pregnancy*



Every woman wants a healthy pregnancy and healthy baby. *Planning Your Pregnancy* provides you with useful information on a variety of topics, including:

- The basics of a healthy lifestyle before pregnancy
- How reproduction works: the menstrual cycle, fertilization, and fertility
- The importance of a complete family and medical history

# SURVEY

Enter to win a collection of tools that are free and full of ways to improve the health of women and babies!

After reviewing this *Pregnant? Think! Don't Drink!* Handbook, please complete this short survey and fax it to (518) 426-4728 or mail it to ACOG District II, 152 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY, 12210 in the envelope provided.

The first 500 people to return the survey will get free tools to help improve the health of women and babies! Don't forget your mailing address! Please print legibly!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

## **Please circle the number that best describes your opinion of the *Pregnant? Think! Don't Drink!* Handbook.**

1. I am satisfied with the *Pregnant? Think! Don't Drink!* Handbook.

Strongly Agree  
4

Agree  
3

Disagree  
2

Strongly Disagree  
1

2. After reading the *Pregnant? Think! Don't Drink!* Handbook, I am more educated about drinking alcohol and how it affects pregnancy.

Strongly Agree  
4

Agree  
3

Disagree  
2

Strongly Disagree  
1

3. What parts of the *Pregnant? Think! Don't Drink!* Handbook are helpful or not helpful to you?

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4. I am more able to be safe and protect myself from harm as a result of reading the *Pregnant? Think! Don't Drink!* Handbook. \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

5. I was presented with this handbook in a respectful manner. \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

6. After reading this handbook I have more information to make educated health decisions regarding drinking. \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

7. I will pass along the information I learned from this handbook to members of my family and community. \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No



please continue on reverse side →

**Additional Comments:**

Please take a moment to answer these additional questions:

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you or any members of your family identified as having a disability?

\_\_\_\_ Yes    \_\_\_\_ No

If Yes, please check all that apply:

\_\_\_\_\_ I am an individual with a disability.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have a family member with a disability. This person's age is: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I have additional family members with disabilities. Their ages are: \_\_\_\_\_

Please identify the disabilities impacting you and/or your family member(s):

Autism \_\_\_\_\_

Cerebral Palsy \_\_\_\_\_

Developmental Delay \_\_\_\_\_

Epilepsy \_\_\_\_\_

Learning Disabilities \_\_\_\_\_

Mental Illness \_\_\_\_\_

Mental Retardation \_\_\_\_\_

Neurologically Impaired \_\_\_\_\_

Physical/Orthopedic \_\_\_\_\_

Spina Bifida \_\_\_\_\_

Traumatic Brain Injury \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a medical care provider: \_\_\_\_ Yes    \_\_\_\_ No

*Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.*

# RESOURCES

## State Resources

New York State Office of Alcoholism and  
Substance Abuse Services  
General Information: 518- 473-3460  
[www.oasas.state.ny.us/fasd](http://www.oasas.state.ny.us/fasd)

Pregnancy Risk Network/NYS Teratology  
Information Service  
Toll Free: 800-724-2454

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Support Network  
of NYC & Long Island  
(NOFAS Affiliate for the NYC Metropolitan area)  
[www.fssn.org](http://www.fssn.org)

National Council on Alcoholism and Drug  
Dependence- Rochester Area  
(NOFAS Affiliate for Upstate NY)  
585-426-8000  
[www.nydas.org](http://www.nydas.org)

## National Resources

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)  
[www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)

National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD)  
1-800-NCA-CALL  
[www.ncadd.org](http://www.ncadd.org)

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)  
[www.niaaa.nih](http://www.niaaa.nih)

National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (NOFAS)  
1-800-66-NOFAS  
[www.nofas.org](http://www.nofas.org)

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)  
Treatment Facility Locator  
1-800-662-HELP  
[www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov](http://www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov)

If you need immediate help with an alcohol  
or substance abuse problem  
in New York State, call the

**OASAS HOPEline: 1-877-8-HOPENY**



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