

If you do decide to drink during pregnancy, know your units.....

Do you really know how many units are in your favourite drink?
The guide below should help you stick to the **recommended limit of one to two units, once or twice a week.**

This is one unit.....



Half pint of regular beer, lager or cider



1 very small glass of wine (9%)



1 single measure of spirits



1 small glass of sherry



1 single measure of aperitifs

....and each of these is more than one unit



A pint of regular beer, lager or cider



A pint of strong/premium beer, lager or cider



Alcopop or a 275ml bottle of regular lager



440ml can of regular lager or cider



440ml can of super strength lager



250ml glass of wine (12%)



Bottle of wine (12%)

For more information on alcohol or pregnancy:

If you are struggling to cut down on drinking while pregnant, please contact:
`young addiction` on 01296 33193
`Oasis` on 01296 338008 for Aylesbury or 01494 898480 for High Wycombe

You can also visit:

www.bucksdaat.co.uk

www.thesite.org/drinkanddrugs/drinking

For details of other services within your area, you can contact Drinkline on 0800 9178282

For help and advice on your pregnancy, you can visit:

The Site: www.thesite.org/sexandrelationships/familyandfriends/beingaparent/youngmums

Family Lives: www.familylives.org.uk/advice/where-can-young-parents-go-support

Buckinghamshire



Safeguarding
Children Board

Alcohol & Pregnancy

Guidance for expectant mums

Should you drink, and if you do, how much is too much?

There is a lot of information available on whether you should drink during pregnancy, and if you do, how much is too much.

The best advice is to avoid drinking any alcohol when you are pregnant, particularly in the first 3 months.



However, if you do decide to drink, stick to one or two units, once or twice a week, and don't get drunk. Avoid saving up all your units and then drinking them all at once (for example, at a party).

Why are expectant mums advised not to drink?

Experts are not 100% sure about the precise impact even small amounts of alcohol can have on unborn babies. Alcohol crosses from your bloodstream, through the placenta, into your baby's blood. Heavy drinking while pregnant can put the development of your baby at risk. In the first three months of pregnancy, heavy drinking can damage the developing organs (such as the heart or kidneys) and nervous system of the foetus.

If mothers drink heavily when pregnant, it puts their baby at risk of foetal alcohol spectrum disorder - this condition is life long, and children can have a range of symptoms including:

- Low birth weight; possible problems with their growth and long term development.
- Facial abnormalities— such as small eyes or a cleft palate.
- Difficulties with their eye sight or hearing.
- Learning / Behavioural Difficulties.
- A higher risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (cot death)

High levels of alcohol may also pose a health risk for expectant mothers, (particularly those under the age of 18, whose livers are not yet fully developed). For advice regarding the health risks to mothers who may be drinking to excess, you can visit:

www.nhs.uk/Livewell/alcohol/Pages/Effectsofalcohol

What if I didn't know I was pregnant, and I drank?

Don't panic. Many women are unaware of their pregnancy during the first few weeks and will drink.

However, once you are aware of your pregnancy, the advice is to stop drinking, or to keep within the recommended limit. If you are concerned, speak to your GP or midwife

What if I am struggling to cut down on my drinking?

Some women may find it hard to cut down on alcohol, particularly if it has been a large part of their social life. If you are struggling to cut down, speak to your GP or midwife.

If you are unsure how much you drink, you could try keeping a drinks diary - think back over the last week and try to remember when and where you drank, who you were with and how much you had. You may find there is a pattern to your drinking; once you work that out, you may be able to break the pattern.

There are apps which can help you monitor your drinking, available for download on any mobile phone which has internet access. For more information visit: www.nhs.uk/Livewell/alcohol/Pages/Alcoholtracker.aspx

If you are reliant on alcohol or binge drinking, you can contact a specialist group in your area. The people that you speak to will understand and will be able to give you non-judgemental practical help and advice.

For confidential help and support in your area, contact 'young addaction' on 01296 331933

Alcohol & Pregnancy - some tips!

- Make sure you are clear on what a unit of alcohol actually is - see back page.
- Take care in pubs & restaurants, as they often serve strong lagers or large glasses of wine.
- Experiment with making your own non-alcoholic cocktails. Try blending fruit juices together, or add a flavoured syrup to sparkling water.
- If you are out with friends, you may be under pressure to drink, particularly if you have not yet told them you are pregnant. You could tell them you are driving, on a health kick or simply smile sweetly and stick to soft drinks.
- Try to change your routine. If you tend to spend evenings drinking with friends, try taking up a new hobby or class (e.g. Pregnancy yoga classes are a fun way to meet other expectant mums)

