

# What you can do to support someone to have an alcohol-free pregnancy

Social relationships are especially important during major life transitions like pregnancy, and the support of partners, friends and family can really help.

This includes actively supporting someone's decision to have an alcohol-free pregnancy – whether it is through planning social events without alcohol, providing plenty of alcohol-free alternatives, or joining them in going alcohol-free.

## Why people decide to have an alcohol-free pregnancy

It is important not to drink alcohol when pregnant or planning a pregnancy. This is because any alcohol consumed passes directly to the developing baby and can damage the baby's brain, body, and organs. It can cause a lifelong disability known as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).

Alcohol can also affect fertility, increase the time it takes to get pregnant, and increase the risk of miscarriage, stillbirth, and premature birth.

Most people won't know the moment they become pregnant, which means alcohol consumed – from the moment someone starts trying – could be doing damage to the developing baby.

That's why the moment someone starts trying to get pregnant is the moment to stop drinking alcohol.

## Ways to support alcohol-free pregnancies

Partners, friends, and family can be an important source of support for someone who is pregnant or trying to become pregnant by:

- Respecting their decision to have an alcohol-free pregnancy.
- Avoid drinking alcohol around them and join them in going alcohol free.
- Choosing ways of socialising that don't involve alcohol, like going to a café, meeting for dinner, or unwinding with an activity like going for a walk.
- Offering non-alcoholic drinks or bringing non-alcoholic drinks to social events.
- Backing the person up if they are being pressured to drink alcohol in social situations, encouraging others to support their decision to go alcohol-free.

One of the best things partners, family and friends can do is make sure the person knows they are actively supported in their decision to have an alcohol-free pregnancy.

Joining them in going alcohol-free is a great way to show your support – research shows people are more likely to have an alcohol-free pregnancy if their partner or close support people have stopped drinking alcohol too.

## Talking about alcohol use



If you are raising the subject of alcohol with a partner, family member or friend, it is important to be open and compassionate. Some people can find it difficult to stop or cut back on drinking alcohol. Let the person know you are there to support them.

If they have questions about their alcohol use or are having trouble stopping drinking, they can talk to their doctor, midwife or obstetrician.

Health professionals speak to lots of people about alcohol. They can answer questions and provide information on services offering support and advice.

If you need someone to talk to for advice or support, we have some suggested services at the end of this resource and more are recommended on our website.

It is never too late to stop drinking alcohol during pregnancy. Throughout a pregnancy the baby is developing and growing.

Health professionals and a range of services can provide advice and support on alcohol.

## More information and support

- To learn more about alcohol, pregnancy, breastfeeding and FASD, visit: [everymomentmatters.org.au](https://everymomentmatters.org.au)
  - For help cutting back on alcohol, you can speak to a doctor. You can also find support, counselling and referral from the National Alcohol and Other Drug Hotline on **1800 250 015** or [drughelp.gov.au](https://drughelp.gov.au)
  - To learn more about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) or find FASD-informed services, contact FASD Hub at [fasdhub.org.au](https://fasdhub.org.au) or NOFASD at [nofasd.org.au](https://nofasd.org.au) or **1800 860 613**
  - For more information on the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) Alcohol Guidelines, visit: [nhmrc.gov.au/alcohol](https://nhmrc.gov.au/alcohol)
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