

Question: For pregnant adults, how much alcohol is considered safe enough to take during pregnancy to prevent fetal alcohol syndrome?

Summary: For many years, pregnant women are strongly recommended against alcohol during pregnancy. When a pregnant woman drinks alcohol, alcohol travels through blood and baby's blood through the umbilical cord and placenta. The alcohol also spreads to the baby's tissues and organs causing damage as breakdown of alcohol in babies are much slower compared to adults. The main reason for this is that heavy use of alcohol during pregnancy is linked to a long-term and irreversible condition known as fetal alcohol syndrome disorder (FASD) (LeWine, 2020). FASD is a wide term describing the effects that can occur in a child whose mother drank alcohol during pregnancy. Some of the features include a small head, below average weight and height, difficulty with learning and behavioral problems (Brubaker, 2018). Although it is sad that fetal alcohol syndrome is irreversible, the good side is that it is 100% preventable by preventing any alcohol intake.

Despite this clear advice, up to 50% of women still drink during pregnancy (LeWine, 2020). This usually occurs because of insufficient maternal education or just bad environmental influence, like friends or family. While some pregnant women, just later found out they are pregnant, stopping as soon as possible would be the best thing to do for the mom and baby.

Conclusion: Although medical evidence is not very strong supporting strict abstinence from alcohol during pregnancy, and some studies found that low to moderate amount did not harm their baby, best advice remains that women should avoid any alcohol if pregnant or planning to get pregnant (LeWine, 2020). For it is not clear how much alcohol it takes to cause problems, best choice is not to risk any baby's chances of getting the fetal alcohol syndrome. Based on the studies of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, it is estimated in the United States, somewhere between 800 and 8,000 babies could be born each year with FAS (Smith, 2019). That means we can save up to 8000 fetuses from getting fetal alcohol syndrome with proper education to women planning to get pregnant about how alcohol affect the fetal development. For the pregnant women who can't stop drinking alcohol, referring them to Alcoholic Anonymous group, where they share experiences and help recover alcoholism, may help them stop as soon as possible.

Work Cited:

Primary Article:

Howard E. LeWine, M. D. (2020, January 29). *Drinking a little alcohol early in pregnancy may be okay*. Harvard Health. <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/study-no-connection-between-drinking-alcohol-early-in-pregnancy-and-birth-problems-201309106667>.

Secondary Article:

Brubaker, M. (2018, August 31). *Sobering study about drinking for two*. UC San Diego Health.
<https://health.ucsd.edu/news/features/Pages/2018-09-10-drinking-for-two-alcohol-consumption-while-pregnant-and-fasd.aspx>.

Tertiary Article:

Smith, V. C. (2019, August 20). *Fetal alcohol Spectrum Disorders: FAQs of parents & families*.
HealthyChildren.org.
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