

# Prenatal Education

## Key Messages for Ontario



### Alcohol

#### Key Messages

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#### **The safest choice is not to drink any alcohol if you are pregnant or are planning a pregnancy.**

If a pregnant woman drinks alcohol, the alcohol also enters her baby's bloodstream. This may lead to physical, learning and behaviour problems for the baby.

It is best not to drink alcohol if you are pregnant or are planning a pregnancy because:

- ▶ There is no known safe amount of alcohol during pregnancy.
- ▶ There is no safe kind of alcohol during pregnancy.
- ▶ There is no safe time for alcohol use in pregnancy.
- ▶ The more alcohol a woman drinks, the greater the risks to her unborn baby.

If you drank alcohol before you knew you were pregnant, talk to your health care provider or call Motherisk at 1-877-327-4346.

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#### **Ask for help if you want to quit drinking.**

Your partner, family members, or friends can be a great source of *support*.

If you have trouble quitting, talk to your health care provider. There are *services* for pregnant women, and their families, who need help to stop drinking (see the section Learn more about where to get help).

Call the Drug and Alcohol Helpline at 1-800-565-8603 for free, confidential information about alcohol and drug addiction services in Ontario.

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## The benefits of breastfeeding outweigh the risks of occasional, light alcohol consumption.

When you drink alcohol, it is transferred to your breastmilk. Alcohol in breastmilk can have effects on your baby. If you would like to decrease the amount of alcohol your baby receives:

- ▶ Drink alcohol right after breastfeeding, not before breastfeeding.
- ▶ Limit the amount you drink to one or two standard drinks per occasion. A standard drink is:
  - ▶ Beer (5%) – 341 mL (12 oz).
  - ▶ Wine (12%) – 142 mL (5 oz).
  - ▶ Spirits (40%) – 43 mL (1.5 oz).
- ▶ Allow enough time for the alcohol to be eliminated from your body before the next feeding. On average, it takes up to two hours for one drink to be eliminated.

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## Learn more about where to get help.

You can find out more about alcohol and how to quit drinking from the following resources.

- ▶ Your local public health unit 1-866-532-3161
- ▶ Motherisk Alcohol and Substance Use Helpline 1-877-327-4636  
[www.motherisk.org/women/contactUs.jsp](http://www.motherisk.org/women/contactUs.jsp)
- ▶ Ontario Drug and Alcohol Helpline 1-800-565-8603  
[www.drugandalcoholhelpline.ca](http://www.drugandalcoholhelpline.ca)
- ▶ oMama  
[www.omama.com](http://www.omama.com)