

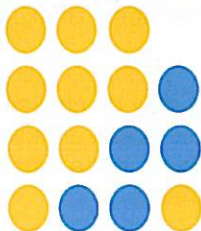
# HELP A PREGNANT FRIEND AVOID ALCOHOL

**JOIN** the  
Circle of  
Friends  
in the battle  
against FASD



**calgary fetal alcohol network**

*Support for Today  
Prevention for Tomorrow*



# Drinking and Pregnancy

Is your friend or loved one pregnant or thinking about becoming pregnant?

If she's drinking alcohol, talk with her about the risks of drinking during pregnancy. Women need to know their safest choice during this special time is to avoid any kind of alcohol.

**The safest advice is:  
"No Alcohol is Best"**

**There is no known safe level, time, or type of alcohol to use during pregnancy.**

## Be the Friend Who Cares

Deciding to talk to a friend or loved one about her drinking may seem difficult. Because you care, you may be the best person to talk to her about drinking.

### You Can Make a Difference

It may be challenging to talk with her about drinking. Keep in mind this is not a moral issue. Be a friend.

Not everyone knows it is unsafe to drink during pregnancy. She may need support and professional help – the sooner the better for her and her baby.

## Women Listen to Those Who Care.

In a recent survey of women, most agreed that friends, relatives, husbands, or partners should encourage a pregnant friend not to drink. In a Hazleden Institute study, nearly 70% of 800 recovering drug and alcohol abusers said they stopped using alcohol or drugs only after a friend spoke with them.

## A Pregnant Woman Cares Deeply About Her Child

She wants the best possible life and future for her baby.

She may be more willing to listen, learn, and make changes to protect herself and her baby during pregnancy after you speak with her.

## Will You Be The One Who Cares?

Be one she'll listen to. Here are some tips for talking with her to offer information and support in a caring, non-judgmental way.

# Preparing the Talk

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⇒ **Know The Risks**

⇒ **Know the Resources**

⇒ **Know Your Feelings**

⇒ **Consider Her  
Possible Reactions**

⇒ **Practice Your Talk**

- Learn about the risks of drinking during pregnancy
- Find out what resources are available to learn more about FASD
- Set a time and a place where you can meet that is safe and private. Be prepared to have a frank discussion on a very important topic
- Consider writing down what you want to say ahead of time. Practice the discussion. Anticipate the difficulties and her possible reactions
- Remember: it is not necessary that everything be said at once. Be considerate of her feelings and offer to meet again soon
- It is not your place to judge, it is your place to support and encourage

SUPPORT YOUR PREGNANT FRIENDS...

# FRIENDS CARING FOR PREGNANT FRIENDS



C ommunicate

A ssist

R efer

E ncourage

Don't Stand  
Quietly By

You Can Make a Difference

# Communicate

## Be Prepared and Be a Friend

- Have a sincere, caring, positive and non-judgmental attitude
- Tell her you care about her as well as the baby. Talk about what she cares about...her health, the baby's health, and a safe pregnancy
- Share the fact that you care about her, her baby. They are both important to you!

## Listen to her feelings:

- Let her share her feelings. They are valid
- Allow her to talk about why she might drink. Does she feel socially pressured to drink? Is she depressed or anxious, or feeling stressed?

## Deal with any negative feelings:

- Don't be surprised if there is anger or refusal to talk about drinking during pregnancy
- Do not take it personally. Continue to lend your support and encouragement
- Restate your concern for her and her baby
- Talk about the facts related to alcohol's possible harm
- Use open-ended questions that keep the conversation going "Tell me more...what else are you concerned about?"
- Avoid questions that start with "why". They may sound like an attack and she may become defensive
- Keep the conversation as positive and supportive as possible

You Can Make a Difference

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# Assist & Refer

If your friend thinks she has a drinking problem, now is the time to deal with it.

Let her know that it is her choice to stop drinking. Reassure her that she can do it and you are willing to help her.

Together seek support and help.

## Other Ways to Be a Friend

- Help with transportation to classes or treatment
  - Offer to be there when she makes first call to find help
  - Stay in touch and promise your ongoing support
  - Attend group meetings or classes with her.
  - Go for walks
  - Go to the movies
  - Share activities that do not include alcohol
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# Encourage

- Ask if there are other ways you, family or other friends can support her
- Recognize her efforts. Celebrate the small steps
- If she is not following through, explore why she is not. Help her find ways to get around road blocks
- Enjoy the journey together
- Let her know you are concerned about her and her baby
- If she is having difficulties, address them together

# FASD Facts

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- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) are a group of physical and mental birth defects caused by the use of alcohol during pregnancy.
- FASD is a new term which includes Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) and other neurological defects caused by alcohol consumption during pregnancy.
- It is estimated that in Canada at least one child is born with FASD each day.\*
- FASD is the leading cause of preventable birth defects and developmental delay in Canada.\*
- People with FASD may be at risk of early school dropout, juvenile delinquency, drug addiction, alcoholism, mental illness, crimes against property, vandalism, child and spousal abuse, unemployment and poverty.
- FASD is a serious health problem that affects children, families and communities. FASD is a life-long condition to which there is no known cure. A child with FASD becomes an adult with FASD.
- Estimated lifetime extra health care, education and social services costs associated with the care of an individual with FASD are \$1.4M (US)\*

***FASD is 100% preventable***

\*Information taken from Health Canada and the Alberta Partnership on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome.

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# More Information & Resources

Visit our website at:

[www.calgaryfasd.com](http://www.calgaryfasd.com)



calgary health region



**calgary fetal alcohol network**

*Support for Today  
Prevention for Tomorrow*

This handbook was created with the collaboration of the Calgary Fetal Alcohol Network and the Minnesota Department of Health.

