

Media Release

May 13, 2013



No safe time, No safe Type, No Safe amount: Help give your baby a healthy start! Have an alcohol-free pregnancy.

For the first time ever, Canada has one national set of low-risk alcohol drinking guidelines. These guidelines, intended for Canadians of legal drinking age who choose to drink alcohol, aim to provide consistent information across the country to help Canadians moderate their alcohol consumption.

The new guidelines outline standard drinks sizes, limits for men and women, recommendations for youth and when zero is the limit.

Specifically, guideline 4 recommends that **the safest choice for those who are pregnant, planning to become pregnant or breastfeeding is no alcohol at all.** Alcohol exposure in pregnancy can cause birth defects and brain damage to your baby. This lifelong disability is called Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and it does not go away as the child ages. For more information and resources, call the health unit or visit our website.

Over the next few months, the health unit, along with local partners, is promoting the message "No safe time, no safe type, no safe amount." This message refers to the recommendation that there is **no safe time (or trimester) during a pregnancy to drink alcohol, no safe type or brand of alcohol during pregnancy (including coolers, beer, wine and spirits) and no safe amount of alcohol consumption during pregnancy.**

50% of pregnancies are unplanned, so it is possible you drank alcohol before you realized you were pregnant. If this is the case, stop drinking immediately and contact your health care provider.

It is important to maintain your health throughout your reproductive years, even if you aren't planning to have a baby any time soon. This includes monitoring your drinking and living a healthy lifestyle. **Remember, if you are not actively preventing pregnancy with a reliable method of birth control, you are planning a pregnancy.**

A great alternative to drinking alcohol at any time is to substitute alcoholic drinks for non-alcoholic cocktails, also known as "Mocktails." Mocktails are a delicious and fun way to have a drink without the effects of alcohol. For Mocktail recipes, visit the health unit website

<http://www.healthunit.org/alcoholdrug/alcohol/mocktails.htm>

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