

CDC Vital Signs Alcohol and Pregnancy Why Take the Risk?

This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

More than three million women in the U.S. are at risk for exposing their developing baby to alcohol. Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can cause physical, behavioral, and intellectual disabilities that can affect a child's whole life. These disabilities are known as fetal alcohol spectrum disorders. About half of all pregnancies in the U.S. are unplanned, and even if planned, most women don't know they're pregnant until four to six weeks into the pregnancy, which means they might drink alcohol and unknowingly put their developing baby at risk.

Women should avoid drinking alcohol if they're pregnant, trying to get pregnant, or *could* get pregnant. Health care providers should offer alcohol screening and counseling to all women, and advise women who are trying to get pregnant to stop drinking. For women who consume alcohol and are sexually active, providers should recommend birth control.

To learn more, visit cdc.gov/vitalsigns.

For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.