

Alcohol, Pregnancy, and Planning for Pēpi



Alcohol and its Effects on Fertility

Before pregnancy (conception)

Sperm health: Sperm takes about three months to develop. Alcohol can reduce sperm quality, movement, and count. Avoiding alcohol for at least three months before trying to conceive can support fertility.

Ovulation and fertility

Alcohol can disrupt hormones and menstrual cycles, reduce the chance of conceiving, and increase time to pregnancy. Being alcohol-free when planning a pregnancy can support a healthy start.

Understanding Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

FASD is a lifelong brain-based disability caused by alcohol exposure to the fetus during pregnancy. It can be caused by any amount or type of alcohol. This means there is no known safe level of alcohol consumption at any stage of pregnancy.

Many pregnancies are not planned. This means people often consume alcohol before they know they're pregnant. It is important to not assign any blame and instead stop all alcohol as soon as you are aware.

The Effects of Alcohol During Pregnancy

In the body:

- Alcohol enters the bloodstream and reaches all parts of the body, including the developing baby.
- Alcohol passes through the placenta. A baby cannot break down alcohol, which can affect development.

What may be affected:

- Learning, memory, and behaviour
- Growth and physical development
- Sleep and sensory processing
- Brain development
- Emotional regulation

Support for Alcohol Free Pregnancies

Partners, friends, and whānau can help by:

- Going alcohol-free together
- Choosing alcohol-free events
- Offering practical and emotional support
- Helping reduce stress during conception planning and pregnancy

For more information you can visit:

www.alcohol.org.nz

www.fasd-can.org.nz

You're not alone if stopping alcohol is difficult:

- Alcohol and Drug Helpline: 0800 787 797 / free text 8681
- Family Drug Support Aotearoa: 0800 337 877
- 1737 – free call or text for support anytime
- Your GP, midwife, or maternal health provider can help you access local services.



Alcohol Healthwatch
Whakatūpato Waipiro



FASD-CAN