AN ALCOHOL-FREE PREGNANCY IS THE BEST CHOICE FOR YOUR BABY.

PREGNANCY AND ALCOHOL DON'T MIX.

Helpful Resources

The organizations and resources below can provide you with more information on FASDs, drinking and pregnancy, and how to get help if you are pregnant or trying to get pregnant and cannot stop drinking.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities
www.cdc.gov/fasd or call 800–CDC–INFO

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) FASD Center for Excellence
www.fasdcenter.samhsa.gov

National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (NOFAS)
www.nofas.org or call 800–66–NOFAS (66327)

National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD) www.ncadd.org or call 800–NCA–CALL (622-2255)

Substance Abuse Treatment Facility Locator
www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov or call 800–622–HELP (4357)

Alcoholics Anonymous www.aa.org

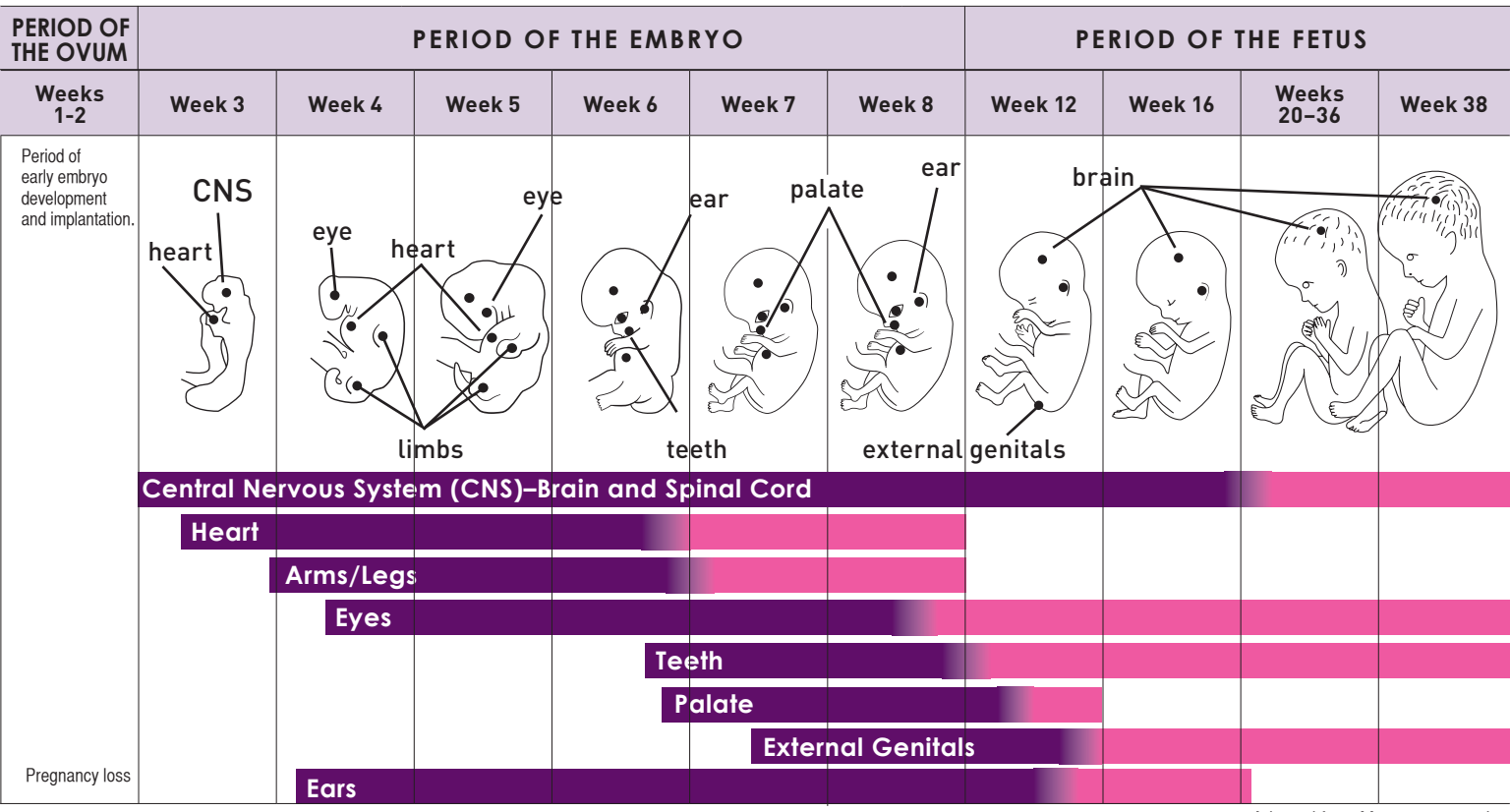
March of Dimes www.marchofdimes.com

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism www.niaaa.nih.gov

FETAL DEVELOPMENT CHART

This chart shows vulnerability of the fetus to defects throughout 38 weeks of pregnancy.*

• = Most common site of birth defects



Period of development when major defects in bodily structure can occur.

Period of development when major functional defects and minor structural defects can occur.

Adapted from Moore, 1993 and the National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (NOFAS) 2009

*This fetal chart shows the 38 weeks of pregnancy. Since it is difficult to know exactly when conception occurs, health care providers calculate a woman's due date 40 weeks from the start of her last menstrual cycle.

What are FASDs?

- Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can cause a range of lifelong physical, behavioral, and intellectual disabilities. These are known as fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs).
- You might have heard of fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS), which is one condition in the FASD spectrum. A baby born with FAS has a small head, weighs less than other babies, and has distinctive facial features.
- Some of the behavioral and intellectual disabilities of people with FASDs include:
  - learning disabilities
  - hyperactivity
  - difficulty with attention
  - speech and language delays
  - low IQ
  - poor reasoning and judgment skills
- People born with FASDs can also have problems with their organs, including the heart and kidneys.

What causes FASDs?

- Alcohol in the mother's blood passes to the baby through the umbilical cord. When a pregnant woman drinks alcohol, so does her baby.
- Because every pregnancy is different, drinking alcohol may hurt one baby more than another.
- The baby's brain, body, and organs are developing throughout pregnancy and can be affected by exposure to alcohol at any time.

"In over twenty years of working on FASD prevention, I have never met a mom who intentionally wanted to harm her unborn baby. Either she didn't know that alcohol was harmful during pregnancy or she needed help to stop drinking."

- Kathleen Mitchell
Vice President and International Spokesperson
National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome(NOFAS)

Are some types of alcohol, such as red wine, safer to drink during pregnancy than others?

- Drinking any type of alcohol can affect your baby's growth and development and cause FASDs. This includes all wines, beer, and mixed drinks.
- A 5-ounce glass of red or white wine has the same amount of alcohol as a 12-ounce can of beer or a 1.5-ounce shot of straight liquor.
- Some drinks, like mixed alcoholic drinks or malt liquor drinks, might have more alcohol in them than a 12-ounce beer.

Is it okay to drink a little or at certain times during pregnancy?

- There is no known safe amount of alcohol use during your pregnancy or when you are trying to get pregnant.
- There is also no safe time to drink when you are pregnant. Alcohol can cause problems for your developing baby throughout your pregnancy, including before you know you are pregnant.
- FASDs are completely preventable if a woman does not drink alcohol during pregnancy—so why take the risk?

Is it okay to drink alcohol if I am trying to get pregnant?

- You might be pregnant and not know it yet. You probably won't know you are pregnant for up to 4 to 6 weeks. This means you might be drinking and exposing your developing baby to alcohol without meaning to.
- Alcohol use during pregnancy can also lead to miscarriage and stillbirth.
- The best advice is to stop drinking alcohol when you start trying to get pregnant.

Why should I worry about alcohol use if I am not pregnant and not trying to get pregnant?

- If you drink alcohol and do not use contraception (birth control) when you have sex, you might get pregnant and expose your baby to alcohol before you know you are pregnant.
- Nearly half of all pregnancies in the United States are unplanned. And many women do not know they are pregnant right away. So, if you are not trying to get pregnant but you are having sex, talk to your health care provider about using contraception consistently.

What if I drank before I knew I was pregnant?

- Make sure you get regular prenatal checkups. Tell your health care provider you had been drinking and ask for advice.
- Remember, it is never too late to stop drinking. Because brain growth takes place throughout pregnancy, the sooner you stop drinking the safer it will be for you and your baby.
- If you are unable to stop drinking, talk to your health care provider. Resources are available to help you.

If I drank when I was pregnant does that mean my baby will have an FASD?

- If you drank any amount of alcohol while you were pregnant, talk with your child's health care provider as soon as possible and share your concerns.
- You may not know right away if your child has been affected. FASDs include a range of physical and intellectual disabilities that are not always easy to identify when a child is a newborn. Some of these effects may not be known until your child is in school.
- There is no cure for FASDs. However, identifying and intervening with children with these conditions as early as possible can help them to reach their full potential.

The best choice is not to drink alcohol at all when you are pregnant or trying to get pregnant.