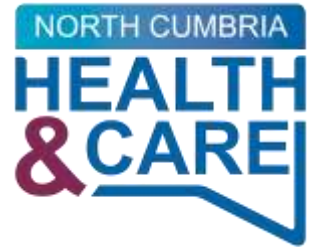


# Starting Well in North Cumbria

## *"Making Every Conversation Count"*

### **Alcohol before, during and after pregnancy**



<b>Before pregnancy</b>	<p><b>If you are trying for a baby, or there may be a chance of you getting pregnant, the best advice is to not drink any alcohol at all.</b></p> <p>Alcohol makes it harder to get pregnant, increases the risk of miscarriage and can be harmful to the baby from the moment you get pregnant. Avoiding alcohol is the best option. Alcohol can also affect the quality of a man's sperm, so partners are encouraged to cut down too.</p>
<b>During pregnancy</b>	<p><b>The best advice we can give you is to not drink any alcohol during pregnancy (no alcohol = no risk).</b></p> <p>Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) are names given to the problems a baby may have if a mother drinks during pregnancy. Alcohol can cause delayed growth, birth defects, and brain damage. A person with FASD can face lifelong challenges.</p> <p>If you have been drinking during your pregnancy, it's never too late to stop. The sooner you do, the healthier your baby will be. Midwives are very supportive of women who need help to stop drinking during pregnancy – don't be afraid to ask. Your family can support you during pregnancy by not encouraging you to drink and by cutting down on the amount they drink themselves.</p>
<b>After pregnancy</b>	<p><b>The best advice we can give you is to not drink in the first few months after birth.</b></p> <p>We don't know for sure what impact drinking alcohol can have on your baby during breastfeeding. We do know that your breastmilk takes on nutrients, flavours and other components from your own diet. This means alcohol can be passed into the breastmilk. A baby's liver and other organs are not mature enough to process this and it can be harmful.</p> <p>Therefore, the best advice we can give you is to not drink alcohol when you are breastfeeding: no alcohol = no risk. You can speak to your midwife or health visitor for more advice.</p> <p><b>Whether you breastfeed or bottle feed your baby, if there is any chance you, your partner (or another person looking after your baby) may co-sleep with them (for example in a bed or on a sofa), the best advice is to not drink any alcohol at all.</b></p> <p>If you have had a drink (and/or taken any drugs) you are more likely to roll on your baby in your sleep, which can cause suffocation and sudden infant death.</p>

***"Our vision is for all families in North Cumbria to be valued, happy and healthy.  
We all want the very best for our families"***

## Further Information on:

# Alcohol before, during and after pregnancy

<b>How does alcohol affect the baby when I am pregnant?</b>	Alcohol affects the baby's growth, especially the brain. The baby may be smaller than normal and may cry a lot. As the child grows, he or she may have problems with behaviour and learning. Other people may say that they drank during their pregnancy and their baby was fine. However each pregnancy, child and mother are different and it is better not to take the risk of causing harm to your baby by drinking alcohol.
<b>Are all alcoholic drinks harmful?</b>	Yes, all types of alcoholic drink can be harmful to your baby whilst you are pregnant. This includes wine, beer, cider, alcoholic fruit drinks and spirits such as rum, whiskey or vodka.
<b>How much alcohol is harmful?</b>	There is no safe amount of alcohol or safe time to drink during pregnancy or when planning to become pregnant. Even a small amount of alcohol can be harmful. It is safest not to drink at all during pregnancy. No alcohol = no harm.
<b>What is FASD?</b>	Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) are names given to the problems a baby may have if the mother drinks during pregnancy. Alcohol can cause delayed growth, birth defects, and brain damage. A person with FASD can face problems throughout life. FASD will be prevented if you don't drink alcohol during pregnancy.
<b>I have drunk alcohol during my pregnancy</b>	Try not to worry. It's never too late to stop and the sooner you do, the healthier your baby will be. Midwives can support women who need extra support to stop drinking during pregnancy – don't be afraid to tell them that you are drinking alcohol. Midwives are used to pregnant women asking them for help with things like alcohol.
<b>What can partners and wider family do to help?</b>	If there's a chance you could become pregnant, or are trying to become pregnant, partners can help by cutting down on alcohol, because it can affect the quality of a man's sperm. We recommend partners drink no more than 1-2 units (one alcoholic drink) a day. Partners can support the mum-to-be by respecting her decision not to drink. Many fathers/partners also stop drinking during the pregnancy and this is a great way to provide support. Drinking alcohol is often part of how people socialise. Sometimes pregnant women feel pressured to drink. Friends and families should respect your decision not to drink, and should help you to avoid or manage situations where you might be tempted to drink.
<b>I think my child may have FASD</b>	Talk to your midwife, health visitor or GP about your concerns. It is important that children who may have FASD get a proper diagnosis. This is because a diagnosis will help children to access any additional support they may need. It will also help to create a caring and structured environment around the child, which will help them to thrive.
<b>Links to further information and advice:</b>	<p><b>Before Pregnancy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">NHS guide to 'Planning Your Pregnancy'</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Tommy's 'Are you Ready' Planning for Pregnancy Tool</a></li> </ul> <p><b>During Pregnancy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">NHS guide to alcohol in pregnancy</a></li> </ul> <p><b>After Pregnancy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">NHS guide to breastfeeding and drinking alcohol</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Lullaby Trust information on co-sleeping</a></li> </ul>