

ALCOHOL & PREGNANCY



You deserve to know about the possible risks of substance use before, during, and after pregnancy. The impact of using substances while pregnant depends on other health factors such as nutrition, mental health, and physical health. You can positively impact your health and your pregnancy by cutting back or quitting the use of alcohol and other substances. It's never too late to make a change.

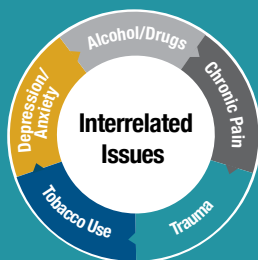
The information provided here is not a replacement for talking with your healthcare provider. Please discuss any questions or concerns that you have with your medical or mental health provider.

SERVICES & RESOURCES

- [Tough as a Mother](#)
- [Women's Health & Alcohol App](#)
- [Mother to Baby](#)
- [Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment](#)
- [Postpartum Support International - Colorado](#)
- [Circle of Parents Colorado](#)
- [Denver Area Central Committee of Alcoholics Anonymous](#)

Reducing or quitting alcohol or other substances can be difficult.* Help is available.

***When a person has developed a physical dependence on alcohol or another substance, the withdrawal symptoms can sometimes be very dangerous. Please talk with your healthcare provider to work together on a safe plan for quitting substance use. In addition, they may be able to help you find services and treatments that can help you quit safely.**



Many factors, such as past trauma, abuse, or violence, are connected to increased alcohol or substance use and substance use disorders. Here are some resources that can help:

- [Colorado Domestic Violence Programs by County](#)
- [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#)
- [Colorado Crisis and Support Line: 1-844-493-TALK \(8255\)](#)
- [211 Colorado: 1-800-944-4773](#)
- [Colorado Family Planning Clinic Locations](#)
- [RAINN National Sexual Assault Hotline: 1-800-656-HOPE \(4673\)](#)

HOW ALCOHOL CAN AFFECT YOUR HEALTH

Alcohol use can cause or increase the likelihood of:

- Breast cancer – even less than one drink per day increases your risk
- Liver, throat, and colon cancers
- Liver disease
- Brain damage
- High blood pressure, heart disease, or stroke
- Weakened bones
- Accidents and/or injury
- Taking risks
- Interactions with some medications
- Difficulty getting a good night's sleep
- Negative mental health effects
- Worsens existing anxiety and depression, including postpartum depression*
- Suicidal thoughts or attempts**

***It's common for individuals to experience a short period of "baby blues" 1-2 weeks after giving birth. For some, this feeling lasts longer and is known as postpartum depression. If you are experiencing this, talk to your healthcare provider.**

****If you are concerned about yourself or someone you know having thoughts of suicide, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255).**

ALCOHOL & PREGNANCY

DRINKING ALCOHOL WHILE YOU ARE PREGNANT MAY CAUSE

- Miscarriage or stillbirth
- Premature (early) birth
- Low birth weight
- Impacts on physical development of the fetus, including damage to major organs
- A range of effects on the child's learning, daily living skills, and interactions with peers. Some may not appear until school age/teen years.
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders



FASD

FASD FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDERS

- FASD cannot be reversed, but it can be prevented.
- All forms of alcohol pose a similar risk.
- Risk can increase based on how often and how much alcohol you drink during pregnancy.
- FASD is a lifelong disability. If you or your family have questions, talk to your healthcare provider about options for prevention and support.

There is no known safe amount of alcohol use during pregnancy or when trying to get pregnant. There is also no safe time to drink during pregnancy.

Visit [Illuminate Colorado, the Colorado Chapter of the National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders](#).



illuminate
Building Brighter Childhoods

BREASTFEEDING & ALCOHOL USE

- When the parent who is producing milk drinks alcohol, it ends up in the milk.
- Typically, the highest amount of alcohol is found in human milk 30-60 minutes after drinking alcohol. The more alcohol a person drinks, the longer it remains in the milk.

Some parents may use the term “chest feeding” instead of breastfeeding.

MARIJUANA & PREGNANCY

Marijuana use during pregnancy...

- May cause negative effects on fetal brain development.
- Can increase the risk of stillbirth.
- May contribute to low birth weight.
- May cause the child to receive lower scores on tests of attention, coordination, and behavior later in life.

THC* and other chemicals in marijuana cross the placenta during pregnancy and can be found in human milk. Marijuana use early in pregnancy and/or use throughout pregnancy is more likely to lead to harmful effects.

Marijuana use while breastfeeding...

- May result in hyperactivity, poor cognitive function, and other long-term consequences to the infant.
- Human milk can contain THC anywhere from six days to six weeks after marijuana use. This means that your baby can still be affected by THC even after you stop using marijuana.

*THC is the chemical in marijuana that causes the feeling of being “high.” There are many chemicals found in marijuana, but the information above is based on research of THC.