

# Environmental Exposures



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# Creating Healthy Environments



Alcohol

Exposures at Work

Second-hand Smoke

Tobacco

Lead

Air Quality

Cleaning Products

Personal Care Products

Plastics

Paint

Medications and Drugs

Pesticides

Mercury

# Tobacco



# Tobacco

## Benefits of quitting:

- Healthier birth weight.
- Better chance of full term pregnancy.
- Reduced risk of cancers and heart disease.
- Lower risk of SIDS, respiratory problems, allergies, middle ear infections.
- Increased energy and fewer health problems for mother.
- A good breast milk supply.
- Saves \$.

# Second-hand Smoke

Is linked to:

- Early birth
- Miscarriage



# If I Smoke, Should I still Breastfeed?



# Video



## Creating a Smoke-Free Environment for Your Children

# Cannabis

## Risks of Cannabis on Fertility, Pregnancy, Breastfeeding and Parenting



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- Legal does not make it safe.
- Consists of more than 700 chemical compounds including THC and CBD.
- May have negative effects on pregnancy, fetus and breastfeeding.
- Caution is advised.



# Alcohol

Damage to brain causes difficulty learning, remembering, thinking things through and getting along with others

Vision problems

Hearing problems

Heart, kidney, liver and other organ damage

Slow growth

Bones, limbs and fingers that are not formed properly



## Be Safe: Have an alcohol-free pregnancy


- *Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can cause birth defects and brain damage to your baby.*




Any kind of alcohol can harm your baby

- *It is safest not to drink any alcohol during pregnancy.*
- *In fact it is best to stop drinking before you get pregnant.*

# Mocktails for Mom



**Mocktails for Mom**  
Be Safe: Have an alcohol-free pregnancy



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# Alcohol and Breastfeeding

## Mixing Alcohol and Breastfeeding

Resource for mothers and partners about drinking alcohol while breastfeeding



With thanks to the LCBO for its support in developing and producing this resource. Revised 2010

English

### The Importance of Breastfeeding

Breastmilk is the natural food for newborns. It contains all the nutrition your baby needs. The Public Health Agency of Canada, the Dietitians of Canada, the Canadian Paediatric Society and the College of Family Physicians of Canada agree:

- ✓ Babies need only breastmilk for the first 6 months.
- ✓ At 6 months, babies begin to eat solid foods and continue to be breastfed for up to 2 years and beyond.

### Is it OK to have a few drinks at a special event?

- ✓ The safest choice is not to drink alcohol if you are planning to become pregnant, are pregnant, or are breastfeeding. Choose an alcohol free drink instead.

### What does alcohol do to the milk supply?

- ✓ Alcohol decreases the letdown reflex and this could mean the baby gets less breastmilk during feedings.
- ✓ Drinking alcohol does not increase milk production. In fact, heavy drinking may decrease the milk supply.

### What effect can breastmilk containing alcohol have on a baby?

- ✓ Babies may not like breastmilk containing alcohol. The baby could drink less milk.
- ✓ The younger the baby, the more immature his/her system, and the greater the difficulty in clearing the alcohol from his/her body. Limit alcohol intake, particularly when breastfeeding newborns (first 3 months).
- ✓ Mothers who drink heavily while breastfeeding put their baby at risk for poor weight gain, poor growth, and possible developmental delays.

Mothers and their partners can receive conflicting advice from family, friends and health care providers regarding alcohol use and breastfeeding. Make an informed choice when it comes to drinking alcohol while breastfeeding. Breastfeeding is best for your baby, and it's good for your health, too.

# Medications and Drugs



- Is this medication safe to take in pregnancy?
- What are the benefits?
- What are the risks?
- Are there any alternatives?

# Hidden Exposures



# Exposure to Harmful Substances

- Plastics
- Paints and thinners
- Lead
- Cleaning products
- Pesticides



# Tips to Minimize Risks in the Home

- Air out new plastics
- Dust and mop
- Remove shoes
- Use lead-free products
- Ventilate your home



# Personal Care Products

Some products to watch for:

- Tanning products
- Nail polish and nail polish remover
- Hairspray and hair dye
- Skin products
- Cosmetics
- Insect repellents
- Natural health products or herbal substances





# Mercury

- Choose fish that are low in mercury.
- Choose 'light' tuna.
- Avoid mercury fillings.
- Do not have mercury fillings removed during pregnancy.



# Air Quality

- Reduce strenuous activity when air quality is bad.
- Keep the home free of dust.
- Ventilate rooms.
- Ensure that fuel-burning appliances are well maintained.
- Reduce the use of aerosol sprays.



# Exposures at Work

- Exposure to harmful substances can be higher at work than at home.
- Exposure can happen in many workplace settings.
- Couples can be careful not to bring contaminants home.



# Video on Environmental Exposures



# What Can You Do?



# For More Information

- Canadian Partnership for Children's Health and Environment (CPCHE) [www.healthyenvironmentforkids.ca](http://www.healthyenvironmentforkids.ca)
- Expecting to Quit [www.expectingtoquit.ca](http://www.expectingtoquit.ca)
- Health Care Provider
- Local Public Health Unit
- Motherisk [www.motherisk.org](http://www.motherisk.org)
- Occupational Health and Safety Officer
- Pregnets [www.pregnets.org](http://www.pregnets.org)
- Smoker's Helpline [www.smokershelpline.ca](http://www.smokershelpline.ca)
- Workers Health and Safety Centre [www.whsc.on.ca](http://www.whsc.on.ca)

The information represents the best practice guidelines at the time of publication. The content is not officially endorsed by the Government of Ontario. Consult your health care provider for information specific to your pregnancy.



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