



## no alcohol in pregnancy

There are many better alternatives to alcohol, especially for women.

While debate is ongoing over the safe level of alcohol during pregnancy, a team of psychiatrists in London have argued for total abstinence, due to concerns over behavioural effects, according to a recent editorial in the *British Medical Journal*.

It is well known that heavy drinking during pregnancy, particularly in the early stages, results in birth defects known as foetal alcohol syndrome (FAS). These include stunted growth, facial abnormalities and brain damage.

But recent research suggests that consuming as little as even *one drink per week* may put babies at risk and cause behavioural disorders, such as hyperactivity, problems with mental organisation and difficulties in understanding the consequences of one's behaviour. But alcohol can even affect a woman's chance of conceiving in the first place.

### recommendations

Unlike the Australian Alcohol Guidelines (endorsed by the National Health and Medical Research Council), which advise that if pregnant women chose to drink they should have less than

seven standard drinks over a week, the Ministry of Health in New Zealand has joined countries such as the US and Canada to advocate that women who are pregnant, planning pregnancy or breastfeeding avoid alcohol completely.

### what to drink

Try these refreshing beverages, which provide health benefits:

**Sparkling natural mineral**—water comes with no added calories!

**Dry ginger ale with a wedge of lime**—very refreshing, and ginger contains antinausea properties.

**Fruit juice**—a good source of folate, an important vitamin for proper development of the baby's nervous system.

**Vegetable juice**—bright orange and green colours provide anti-oxidant carotenoids.

**Low-fat milk or soy milk**—warmed or chilled, supplies extra protein.

**Fruit smoothie**—a way to include whole fruit and extra protein from milk.

See page 31 for a no-alcohol alternative drink.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

For further information on healthy eating, please contact *Sanitarium Nutrition Service*

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