Alcohol Use and Pregnancy

What is it and why is it bad for the baby?

- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) is the term used for the ways babies are harmed by alcohol the mom drank while she was pregnant.
- Drinking alcohol while you are pregnant increases the risk of alcohol-related birth defects.
- Some of the possible birth defects are below.
  - mental retardation.
  - abnormal facial features.
  - growth problems.
  - problems with the central nervous system.
  - vision and hearing problems.
  - behavior problems.
  - a hard time with learning and focusing on things.
- Alcohol can damage a fetus at any stage of pregnancy. This includes the early weeks before a woman knows that she is pregnant.
- Any alcohol use during pregnancy can lead to a bigger chance of having a miscarriage. It can also lead to premature births.
- The problems caused by FAS last throughout the child’s whole life.
- None of the problems can be cured.
- Alcohol changes how the “wiring” in your baby’s brain is designed.
- Alcohol-related birth defects are completely preventable.
- FAS are the most common cause for mental retardation that could have been prevented.

What can I do?

- Drinking alcohol while you are pregnant causes FAS.
- No amount of alcohol is safe to consume while you are pregnant.
- Any alcohol consumption poses a significant risk to a developing baby.
- Ask your doctor or care manager for help if you are having trouble not drinking alcohol during your pregnancy.

*The best way to help your baby is by not drinking alcohol during your pregnancy.*