

Alcohol, Pregnancy and Partner Support

Information for Service Providers



Many women are more likely to avoid alcohol during pregnancy if their partners support them in doing so. Conversely, women find it more difficult to reduce their drinking when their partners oppose that decision or take steps to undermine their efforts. If a woman's partner is supportive of her decision regarding reducing alcohol use during pregnancy, service providers can involve partners in supporting healthy alcohol-free pregnancies.

5 Ways Partners Can Support Women

Service providers can talk to women about what they would find supportive. Some of the things women might find helpful include having their partner:

- 1 Take a pause from alcohol during the pregnancy by quitting or cutting down. Avoid drinking around her and in social situations when they are together.
- 2 Tell family, friends and anyone offering her alcohol that there is no known safe time to drink alcohol during pregnancy and no known safe amount.
- 3 Offer her non-alcoholic drinks (e.g., mocktails) and bring non-alcoholic drinks to social events.
- 4 Take part in social and recreational activities with her that don't involve alcohol.
- 5 Help reduce the stress in her life. (You can ask her for specific details of how you might do this.)

Many partners want to support their pregnant partners. Service providers can involve partners, directly and indirectly, by:

- ▶ Including information about how partners can support women in both preconception and prenatal materials.
- ▶ Asking women if they would like to invite their partner or a close family member or friend to their next appointment to discuss how they can support them in achieving an alcohol-free pregnancy, as well as making healthy choices overall.
- ▶ Sharing suggestions of how soon-to-be parents can be supportive of their pregnant partners. Encourage partners to ask pregnant women what kind of support she needs to avoid alcohol, reduce stress, and still have fun.

Remember...

- ▶ A pregnant woman's partner can be male or female.
- ▶ Some women may not have a partner and may rely on the support of family or friends.
- ▶ Many partners are interested in thinking about or changing their own alcohol and drug use as they too prepare for parenthood.
- ▶ Service providers can provide information and connect partners with community resources. (It's best to do this separately from a woman's care and treatment.)

Adapted with permission from the BC Centre of Excellence for Women's Health.
For more information on their work visit: Coalescing on Women and Substance Use • www.coalescing-vc.org

To read a short information package on this topic which includes information on what you can do to help as a service provider, where to make a referral in Manitoba, and much more, visit manitoba.ca/healthychild/fasd/resources.html

