

Alcohol and Second Hand Smoke Fact Sheet

(For Instructor use only)

From the Public Health Agency of Canada (June 2005)

Alcohol and Pregnancy

- Drinking even moderate amounts when pregnant may damage the fetus and lead to a range of health problems called Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.
- Babies with FASD tend to have many problems with learning, understanding the consequences of their actions, remembering things and getting along with others.
- Drinking even small amounts of alcohol during pregnancy may have a negative impact on the baby's developing brain.
- There is no safe time or amount to drink when pregnant.

Smoking While Pregnant

- A mother inhaling smoke means she is not inhaling enough oxygen for the baby. Therefore, the baby grows more slowly and gains less weight. Low birth weight babies are more likely to get infections and have other health problems.
- There are more than 4,000 chemicals in tobacco smoke, including 50 associated with cancer.
- Nicotine (a chemical in cigarettes) slows blood flow so the baby gets fewer nutrients and less oxygen. It also makes the baby's heart beat faster.
- Exposure to tobacco smoke affects the baby for life. It may have learning problems, ear infections, colds and breathing problems.
- Using electronic cigarettes (vaping) during pregnancy isn't safe. Most electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) contain nicotine, which permanently damages a baby's developing brain and many other organs. E-cigarette liquids also contain chemicals, flavors and other additives that might not be safe for a baby.

Smoking After Birth

Babies who are exposed to smoke after birth (second hand smoke):

- have a higher risk of dying from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) or crib death;
- have more frequent lower respiratory tract problems, such as coughs, pneumonia, bronchitis and croup;
- are more likely to develop asthma and will suffer more from it than children of non-smokers who have asthma;
- have increased ear infections; and
- may have behavioural and learning problems later on.

Vaping Dangers

It's not safe to use vape pens or e-cigarette devices around children. The vapor from e-cigarettes has chemicals in it that can be harmful to children. There's another serious problem with e-smoking devices: Children can get poisoned if they drink the liquid in nicotine delivery devices or refills.

