# Alcohol use during pregnancy – new campaign

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### To help increase Australians’ understanding of the risks of drinking alcohol during pregnancy and while breastfeeding, the Australian Government has funded FARE to develop a national awareness campaign

By international standards Australia has a high rate of alcohol use during pregnancy.[1] National data shows that more than half (55 per cent) of Australian women drink before knowing they are pregnant, and 14 per cent of women continue to drink after knowledge of the pregnancy.[2]

In December 2020, the National Health and Medical Research Council released new [*Australian guidelines to reduce health risks from drinking alcohol.*](https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/health-advice/alcohol)

The guidelines include new recommendations for women who are pregnant or breastfeeding. These state that for:

* Women who are pregnant or planning a pregnancy should not drink alcohol to prevent harm from alcohol to their unborn child.
* For breastfeeding women, not drinking alcohol is safest for their baby.

The guidelines are based on evidence that when a women drinks alcohol during pregnancy or breastfeeds while there is alcohol in the breastmilk, the baby also drinks the alcohol.

Alcohol consumption during pregnancy increases the risk of miscarriage, stillbirth, low birth weight, small for gestational age, and pre-term birth, and can also lead to a baby being born with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD).

People with FASD experience lifelong challenges, including learning and behavioural issues. It is estimated that between two to nine per cent of Australians are born with FASD each year.[3]

To help increase Australians’ understanding of the risks of drinking alcohol during pregnancy and while breastfeeding, the Australian Government has funded the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) to develop a national awareness campaign. The campaign is part of a broader program which includes resources and supports for health professionals, innovative health promotion activities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and targeted resources for women who are most at risk of having alcohol-exposed pregnancies.

FARE CEO, Caterina Giorgi, said the campaign will aim to raise awareness about the need to avoid alcohol during pregnancy, in line with the new Alcohol Guidelines, and the potential risks of alcohol use.

“Pregnancy is a time when people receive a range of mixed messages. This campaign aims to cut through these and provide clear information on alcohol, pregnancy and breastfeeding to ensure that families and communities are healthy and well,” said Ms Giorgi.

The campaign will launch across the country in November this year.

Keep up to date with the campaign by [signing up to the newsletter](https://fare.us7.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=fd6849c7806a1c1c6fc2d9bbe&id=d67099c7d4) or contact FARE info@fare.org.au.

[1] Finlay-Jones, A. (2018). Reducing harms related to alcohol use in pregnancy: Policy and practice recommendations. Canberra, Australia: Deeble Institute for Health Policy Research. <https://ahha.asn.au/publication/health-policy-issue-briefs/deeble-issues-brief-no-28-reducing-harms-related-alcohol-use>

[2] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2020) [National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2019 (aihw.gov.au)](https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/77dbea6e-f071-495c-b71e-3a632237269d/aihw-phe-270.pdf.aspx?inline=true)

[3] Food Regulation Standing Committee (2018). Decision Regulation Impact Statement: Pregnancy warning labels on packaged alcoholic beverages. Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Canberra.

### Metadata