# "Times have changed. The Guidelines and information have come a long way, and the advice is clear."

*This story was first published on Every Moment Matters – Community Stories. You can read it*[*her*](https://everymomentmatters.org.au/taryn-christy-robins-story/)[*e.*](https://everymomentmatters.org.au/gilbertos-story/)

Hearing their mum, Robin, talk about her experiences more than three decades ago really brought home to sisters Taryn and Christy just how different current attitudes are to drinking alcohol in pregnancy.

“I think times have changed a lot. The Guidelines and information have come a long way, and the advice is clear – don’t drink any alcohol while you’re pregnant,” said Taryn (37).

For younger sister Christy (35), a nurse and the mother of a toddler and a newborn, the evidence to support why it’s important not to drink any alcohol during pregnancy is indisputable.

“There’s a lot more information now about the damage that alcohol can do to developing babies. Back when mum was pregnant there wasn’t all that information available,” she said.

Reflecting on her pregnancies with both Taryn and Christy, Robin (67) agrees and feels that sometimes her generation can be more opinionated.

**“I often hear friends my age saying to younger women that one drink won’t hurt. But that is because the information just wasn’t provided to us when we were pregnant. Times have changed and it’s important that everyone in the community is across this.”**

In December 2020, the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) released the updated [*Australian guidelines to reduce health risks from drinking alcohol*](https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/health-advice/alcohol) (the Guidelines), advising that women who are pregnant should not drink alcohol.

Taryn said that with so many people offering opinions when you are pregnant, having clear guidelines on drinking alcohol during pregnancy is incredibly helpful.

“Everyone’s got an opinion on how you should do pregnancy, how you should raise kids, what should be happening at different stages, so it’s this time in your life when everyone just feels like they can have an opinion and say whatever they like.

“With the Guidelines, it’s good to know the evidence and the facts, so you can make informed decisions about what you want to do.”

As a very social family, one thing the sisters had to reconsider was how they would approach spending time with their friends without alcohol playing a part.

“For me I still go out and I still have like water or soda water, but I’ve also redesigned my social life a bit to make it easier,” said Taryn.

“So I’ll catch up with friends for breakfast or a walk or something that doesn’t necessarily involve alcohol, and I’ve really enjoyed that.

“I feel like I’ve got more energy, more time, and have better quality catch-ups with people, so for me it’s been a fun experience.

“Go somewhere where you can have an alternative or have mocktails – they’re amazing these days,” added Christy.

Both Taryn and Christy said that the transition to not drinking alcohol has been made easier by their family support network.

“It’s been amazing getting pregnant at the same time as my sister because we go out together a lot, so both of us not drinking has really helped,” said Taryn.

“It’s good to have a support buddy.”