# Why both mums-and-dads-to-be will benefit from an alcohol-free pregnancy this Christmas

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### Trying for a baby? Or are you already blessed with a bun in the oven? Leading Fertility Specialist and Gynaecologist Dr. Raewyn Teirney, explains why both partners in the relationship should enjoy a pregnant pause and avoid alcohol this festive season.

Christmas. The Festive Season. The Holidays. The Silly Season … whatever you prefer to call the pointy end of the year, there’s no denying that the common denominator for most people is alcohol. As the party season fires up, so too the booze pours freely at almost every social event and/or family gathering. But what if you’re trying for a baby, or you’re indeed already pregnant? For a healthy pregnancy and healthy baby, it’s not just important that mum-to-be abstains from alcohol, but also that dad-to-be does, too. Call it part of smart pregnancy planning and your healthy pregnancy nutrition and diet. Prince Harry has purportedly [embraced this “Pregnant Pause”](https://www.news.com.au/entertainment/celebrity-life/royals/prince-harry-has-given-up-one-of-his-favourite-things-all-for-his-pregnant-wife/news-story/bacbf3ebd1740b779a19695f3d284cf9) philosophy as he and his beautiful bride Meghan prepare for their new family member and it’s setting the trend for couples the world over. Let’s look at the reasons why it’s so important.

## Alcohol can decrease your chances of conceiving

Couples who are trying for a baby will improve their chances of conceiving if both of them stop drinking alcohol. More than two standard drinks a day can have a negative effect on the health of both the sperm and the egg and as such may lower your chance of conceiving. To really optimise your chances, ditch the alcoholic drinks altogether. Being booze-free will also make the ‘trying’ part a lot more sensual and fun for both of you.

## Alcohol leads to weight gain

Aside from the myriad health concerns associated with carrying excess weight, your chances of conceiving a baby are greatly reduced if either partner is overweight. And with the jury definitely *in* on the fact that alcohol leads to weight gain, anyone trying for a baby should stop imbibing to help maintain a healthy weight (it’s been reported that it takes at least 15 minutes of high-intensity cardio to work off just one glass of wine). You see, if either partner is overweight, the chances of conceiving are reduced. Research shows it is much harder to conceive when either the man or woman has a BMI greater than 25, and significantly more so when greater than 30. Mums-to-be who are overweight are also less likely to enjoy a healthy pregnancy.

## Alcohol can endanger the health of your unborn baby

Every drink you have will pass through the placenta to your baby, affecting the development of its brain, spinal cord, and other organs. Drinking alcohol when pregnant can cause miscarriage, stillbirth, premature birth and/or Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), which is the term used to describe the neurodevelopmental impairments that can present in people whose mothers drank while pregnant. FASD can lead to lifelong complications such as learning difficulties, mental illness, and addiction. The first trimester of pregnancy is the riskiest time, but women should abstain throughout the entire pregnancy and also after the birth if they are breastfeeding. If dads-to-be go out in support for them, this will undoubtedly make the alcohol-free journey that much easier for mums-to-be.

## You’ll enjoy the pregnancy journey even more

It’s important to note that the clarity of mind abstaining from alcohol brings with it will allow both dads and mums-to-be to find even more joy in those special milestones of pregnancy – your first ultrasound, baby’s first kick, and your/your partner’s growing and changing body. None of these will be as special if you’re suffering a hangover.

## Tips to stop you tippling

If either of you is finding it tricky to give up your glass or two at the end of the day, why not look for other ways to relax? What about a gentle yoga class you can go to together? Or a brisk walk around the neighbourhood? Or giving each other a relaxing massage? If you’re in a social situation (and let’s face it, you probably will be at this time of year), there are lots of ways you can avoid being ‘pressured’ into imbibing. If you haven’t revealed your pregnancy yet, you could feign a “flu” or tell people you’re both driving in separate cars to and from the event. Or, grab a wine or cocktail glass and fill it with sparkling mineral water and some fruit. Nobody will know you haven’t mixed up a cocktail. If you have announced your happy news, people will certainly understand that mum-to-be isn’t drinking, but dad-to-be may still come under fire from friends to down a few beers. In this case, he can firmly but gently explain that he’s “going out in sympathy and support” for his partner as part of [Pregnant Pause](https://www.pregnantpause.com.au/) and that he doesn’t want to miss a second of this very special time. If that doesn’t work, he could again insist that he is driving as Mum’s burgeoning belly makes it tricky to reach the steering wheel. While Christmas is certainly a time of drinks aplenty, most people have the foresight and empathy to realise that you want to abstain while your family is beginning and/or growing and as such will not pressure you. If they do continue to do so, simply be as firm as possible or if it’s become quite unbearable, extract yourself from the situation saying you’re both tired from a few sleepless nights of baby kicking.

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