Did you know that approximately 50% of pregnancies are unplanned?
About 700 Durham Region teens become pregnant every year.
Alcohol can cause damage to the fetus before a woman even knows she is pregnant.

How could alcohol affect a baby?
- When a mother consumes alcohol it crosses the placenta and enters the babies' bloodstream.
- There is no safe level of alcohol consumption during pregnancy.
- The greater the amount of alcohol consumed during pregnancy, the greater the risk that the baby will develop health issues/concerns.
- Prenatal exposure to alcohol will increase the baby's risk of having a low birth weight (LBW) which is classified as 2,500 grams (5lb 5oz.) or less.
- Alcohol use also increases the risk of spontaneous abortion and preterm birth.
- A fetus exposed to alcohol may be born with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) which is a life long condition and can include:
  - Learning difficulties
  - Behavioural difficulties
  - Brain damage
  - Heart, kidney, liver and other organ damage
  - Vision and hearing problems
  - Bones, limbs and fingers that are not properly formed
  - Slow growth
Guys and alcohol:
- Alcohol can damage the quality of sperm
- Alcohol can also increase the chances of having low sperm count
- Heavy alcohol use may even cause impotence

Alcohol consumption may influence decision making:
Increased amounts of alcohol consumption may cause:
- Decreased self control
- Poor decision making
- Increased risk taking

**IMPORTANT FACTS:**
- Early exposure to alcohol during pregnancy increases the risk for serious physical defects and later exposure increases the risk of growth abnormalities
- About 700 (of the over 15,000) Durham Region teens become pregnant every year
- As many as half of all Canadian pregnancies are unplanned
- Approximately 14% of Canadian women use alcohol while pregnant

**Of Durham Region residents surveyed:**
- 77% felt that there is no safe level of alcohol during pregnancy
- 72% felt that alcohol use during pregnancy could be harmful on the unborn baby
- 52% felt that the baby could be born with alcohol in its system
- 63% felt that the baby could have permanent brain damage
- 66% felt that the baby could have birth defects

**Your Health Before Pregnancy Makes a Difference!**


For more information contact
Durham Health Connection Line
905-666-6241 or 1-800-841-2729
www.region.durham.on.ca

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