

ASK  
THE  
EXPERT

## GRAPE EXPECTATIONS

WILL A GLASS OF RED WINE A DAY HARM MY UNBORN BABY'S DEVELOPMENT?

**A.** There's no proven safe amount of alcohol you can drink during pregnancy. The only way to be sure your baby is not harmed by alcohol is not to drink at all during pregnancy, especially during the first three months. Drinking small amounts of alcohol after this time does not appear to be harmful for the unborn baby. But you should not drink more than two units, and not more than twice per week, or binge drink. A standard glass of red wine is already considered as two units.

Drinking more than the recommended amount of alcohol in pregnancy can cause foetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD). Children with FASD may have learning difficulties, problems with behaviour, physical disability, and emotional and psychiatric problems. Heavy alcohol use in pregnancy can also result in foetal alcohol syndrome (FAS), which can lead to severe physical and mental disability.

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## IS IT SAFE TO DRIVE DURING PREGNANCY? HOW SHOULD THE SEAT BELT BE POSITIONED SUCH THAT MY BABY AND I GET MAXIMUM PROTECTION?

Yes, it is safe to drive during pregnancy.

Secure the lap belt under your pregnant belly, low and snug on your hipbones. The shoulder belt should fit snugly between your breasts in the centre of the chest and off to the side of your belly. You should never wear the belt across or above your pregnancy bump.

**Q. dream date**  
I'm in my third trimester and sleeping is getting uncomfortable. Any sleep positions to recommend?

**A.** The best position is to sleep on your side. Because of your growing baby bump, you will feel more uncomfortable from feelings of breathlessness, back pain and heart burn. Lie on the side, keep your legs and knees bent, and put a bolster or pillow between your legs.



**Q. seep secrets**  
How do I avoid leaking urine when I sneeze or cough post-delivery?

**A.** During pregnancy, the pelvic-floor muscles have to work hard to accommodate the growing baby. The vagina is also stretched during the process of childbirth. However, the body is capable of healing well and often the vagina and surrounding tissues will recover to the pre-pregnancy state. Stress incontinence (leakage of urine when sneezing or coughing) is common during pregnancy and post-delivery. Avoiding constipation and doing pelvic-floor exercises consistently and regularly will help to strengthen the pelvic-floor muscles. Your gynaecologist or physiotherapist will be able to guide you on how to perform these exercises. 🔄



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