

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is good for your baby and has lots of benefits. Breastfeeding can:

- Protect your baby from infection and illness
- Provide your baby with healthy food
- Help your baby to grow strong
- Strengthen bonds with your baby



Alcohol and drugs can pass to the breastfeeding baby through breastmilk. This can cause harm to the baby as it takes about 2 hours for one standard drink of alcohol to leave a woman’s body.

Drinking or using drugs while breastfeeding can reduce the amount of milk you produce and make baby sleep less.

To lessen the amount of nicotine the baby gets, don’t smoke during feedings, and wait as long as possible between smoking and breastfeeding.

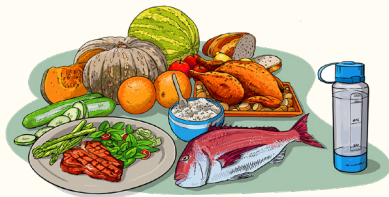
Reducing or stopping your use whilst breastfeeding is best for you and your baby.

Healthy choices for pregnancy and breastfeeding

Not drinking alcohol, smoking tobacco and using drugs is the best choice for your baby. Other things you can do to stay healthy and grow a strong baby includes:

Regular check-ups with your health worker

Daily exercise or physical activity



Lots of sleep and rest

Plenty of healthy food and water

Yarning with grannies, aunties, mums, sisters, cousins and friends about how to keep your baby strong and healthy

Partners and other family members can make healthy choices too.



Getting help and information

Sometimes women don’t get help because they feel shame talking about their alcohol, tobacco and other drug use.

Aboriginal Alcohol and Other Drug Workers, Aboriginal Health Workers or other health professionals are there to help you.

They can talk with you about ways to help keep you and your baby strong and healthy. They can help you stop or cut down your use in safe ways.

It may not be easy to make changes but your family, friends and other people in your community can help and support you.

Aboriginal Support System

Siblings (Brothers, Sisters, Cousins, Nephews and Nieces)

Parents (Includes Aunties and Uncles)

Elders (Includes Grandparents)

Partner (and Children)

Aboriginal health worker or support worker



For more information and help

Local Contact

Alcohol & Drug Support Line

The Alcohol and Drug Support Line can provide information about culturally secure alcohol and drug services in your area. They are a confidential, 24 hour, statewide telephone counselling, information and referral service for anyone concerned about their own or another person’s alcohol or other drug use. Call backs are available.

Ph 9442 5000 or 1800 198 024 (country callers)

Em alcoholdrugsupport@mhc.wa.gov.au

Web alcoholdrugsupport.mhc.wa.gov.au

Parent & Family Drug Support Line

Confidential, 24 hour, statewide telephone counselling, information and referral service for anyone concerned about a loved one’s alcohol or other drug use. Parent callers can speak to a Parent Peer Volunteer with a lived experience of their own son or daughter’s alcohol or other drug use. Call backs are available.

Ph 9442 5050 or 1800 653 203 (country callers)

Em alcoholdrugsupport@mhc.wa.gov.au

Web alcoholdrugsupport.mhc.wa.gov.au

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Aboriginal Programs

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Mental Health Commission



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STRONG SPIRIT  
STRONG MIND

Strong Babies

Aboriginal ways of reducing harm from alcohol and other drugs



## Aboriginal Inner Spirit Model



**Our Inner Spirit is the centre of our being and emotions.**

**When our spirit feels strong our mind feels strong.**

**When our spirit feels tangled our mind feels tangled.**

**Strong Inner Spirit is what keeps people healthy and keeps them connected together.**

**Strong Inner Spirit keeps our family strong, our community strong and our country alive.**

## Alcohol and other drugs can weaken your spirit and your connections with family, community and country

Our way of being healthy is to look after ourselves by making good choices, and to care for our family, community and country. Alcohol and other drugs can tangle and weaken our spirit and mind. This can affect our emotional, social, spiritual and physical well-being. This can weaken our connection to family, community and country.



### People who don't use at all

- o Strong Spirit
- o Strong Family
- o Strong Community
- o Strong Country



### People who use a lot

- o Weak Spirit
- o Angry & Worried Family
- o Worried Community
- o OK Country



### People who use all the time

- o No Spirit
- o Sad Family
- o Sad Community
- o No Country

**How is alcohol affecting your inner spirit and connections to family, community and country?**

## Alcohol and other drugs

**There is no safe amount of alcohol and other drug use in pregnancy.**

Not drinking alcohol or using drugs is important.

When you drink alcohol, so does your baby. When you use drugs, so does your baby. When you smoke, so does your baby.

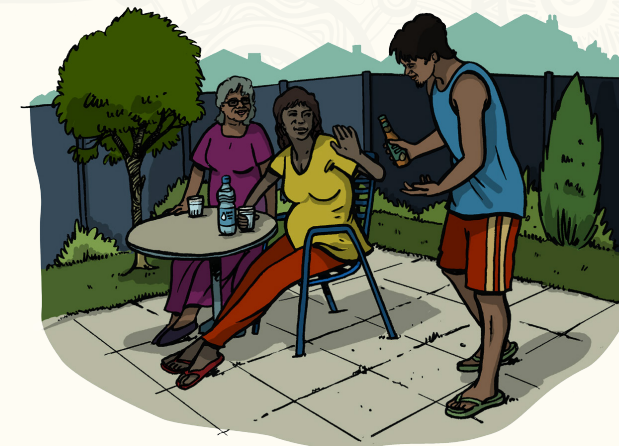
Alcohol and other drugs can cause health issues, like brain damage and birth defects, which could have lifelong impacts for your baby.

Our children need to be born healthy so they have a strong spirit and a strong mind.



## Partners

It's not just up to mums. Partners are important too and can make healthy choices to reduce their alcohol, tobacco and other drug use to support their families.



## Research shows that:

- o If you are pregnant or planning a pregnancy, not drinking alcohol is the safest choice for growing a strong baby.
- o If you are breastfeeding, not drinking alcohol is the safest choice for growing a strong baby.
- o There is no safe level of smoking during pregnancy. The safest option for mum and baby is for mum not to smoke, or be around smoke.
- o There is no safe level of drug use whilst pregnant.
- o Stopping or reducing alcohol, tobacco and other drug use during pregnancy will help your baby grow strong.

**Have a yarn with your health worker if you are worried or would like to know more about the risks of alcohol, tobacco or other drug use during pregnancy.**



## Smoking

Quitting cigarettes before or early on in your pregnancy provides the greatest benefits for you and your baby. However, even if you quit at any time during or after your pregnancy, there are benefits for you and your baby.

Things you can do to protect yourself and children from smoke:

- o Avoid smoke and smoking while trying to get pregnant, during pregnancy and whilst breastfeeding.
- o Stay away from people who are smoking.
- o Keep children and babies away from smoking areas.
- o Don't smoke in the house or the car.

## Medicines

When you are pregnant, some medicines can be harmful to your baby.

If you are taking medicine, you should ask your doctor or health care worker if the medication is safe to use during pregnancy or whilst breastfeeding.

Never take any prescription drugs that were not prescribed for you by your doctor.

If you are buying medicine from the chemist, tell them you are pregnant so that they can check if the medicine is safe for you and your baby.