

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Breast Feeding and Alcohol

It is not good to drink alcohol when you are breast feeding.

## Your baby may get less milk

A let-down reflex starts your milk to flow. Drinking a lot of alcohol can make this reflex slow down. When this happens, you will make less milk, and your baby will get less milk.

## Alcohol hurts your baby

If you drink alcohol when you breast feed, your baby drinks alcohol, too. Alcohol is not good for babies.

When babies get alcohol through breast milk, they may get very drowsy, weak, and they may not gain much weight. Only two drinks of alcohol a day can slow down babies' growth. They learn to crawl and walk later than other babies (slowed psychomotor development).



**If you drink alcohol  
when you breast feed,  
your baby gets alcohol, too.**

# How much alcohol is too much?

**Not drinking any alcohol is safest for you and your baby.** When breast feeding moms have only 1 or 2 drinks a week, they make enough milk and their babies don't get too much alcohol.

**One drink is:**

- 1 12 ounce can of beer
- 1 ounce of liquor
- 4 ounces of wine



**12 ounces of beer  
is 1 drink.**

The amount of alcohol in your breast milk is the same as the amount of alcohol in your blood at that time. If you must drink and breast feed, drink right after you breast feed, instead of before.

If you drink alcohol with a meal, it takes longer for the alcohol to get into your breast milk.

Without food, alcohol is in your breast milk 30 to 60 minutes after you drink it

With food, alcohol is in your breast milk 60 to 90 minutes after you drink it

More than 2 drinks a week is too much alcohol when you are breastfeeding. This means **it is too much alcohol if you drink:**

- three or more drinks in a week
- more than one ounce of liquor in a day
- 2-1/2 ounces or more of alcohol at one time (**binge drinking**)

**If you drink more alcohol than is safe for your baby don't breastfeed on the next feeding.** Pump your breast milk at feeding times and throw the milk out. This will keep your breast milk flowing, and will prevent plugged ducts and engorgement.

**If you want to drink less alcohol and are having trouble,  
here are some places you can call for help:**



Alcoholics Anonymous Hotline for Phoenix area: (602) 264-1341  
East Valley Intergroup: (480) 834-9033  
Agua Fria Intergroup: (623) 937-7770  
Intergrupala Hispana: (602) 957-7457

## **Now that you've read this:**

Tell your nurse or doctor how alcohol can harm your baby. (Check when done.)



If you have any questions or concerns,  
 call your child's doctor or  call \_\_\_\_\_

If you want to know more about child health and illness,  
visit our library at The Emily Center at Phoenix Children's Hospital  
1919 East Thomas Road  
Phoenix, AZ 85016  
602-546-1400  
[www.phoenixchildrenshospital.com](http://www.phoenixchildrenshospital.com)

**Disclaimer**

The information provided at this site is intended to be general information, and is provided for educational purposes only. It is not intended to take the place of examination, treatment, or consultation with a physician. Phoenix Children's Hospital urges you to contact your physician with any questions you may have about a medical condition.

Friday, February 2, 2007 • DRAFT to family review  
#440 • Written by Anita K. Sweet RN, IBCLC • Illustrated by Dennis Swain



# The Emily Center

## Breast Feeding and Alcohol

Child Care/Health Promotion

Si usted desea esta información en español,  
por favor pídasela a su enfermero o doctor.

Name of Health Care Provider: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: 440  
For office use: Date returned: \_\_\_\_\_  db  nb

## Family Review of Handout

**Health care providers:** Please teach families with this handout.

**Families:** Please let us know what you think of this handout.

Would you say this handout is hard to read?  Yes  No

easy to read?  Yes  No

Please circle the parts of the handout that were hard to understand.

Would you say this handout is interesting to read?  Yes  No

Why or why not?

Would you do anything differently after reading  
this handout?  Yes  No

If yes, what?

After reading this handout, do you have any  
questions about the subject?  Yes  No

If yes, what?

Is there anything you don't like about the drawings?

Yes  No

If yes, what?

What changes would you make in this handout to make it better or easier to understand?

Please return your review of this handout to your nurse or doctor or send it to the address below.

Fran London, MS, RN  
Health Education Specialist  
The Emily Center  
Phoenix Children's Hospital  
1919 East Thomas Road  
Phoenix, AZ 85016-7710

602-546-1395

[flondon@phoenixchildrens.com](mailto:flondon@phoenixchildrens.com)

**Thank you for helping us!**