

Identifying women at risk from alcohol, smoking or other drug use during pregnancy

Alcohol, tobacco and other drug use during pregnancy is risky and may cause harm to the fetus. Intervention is required for pregnant women at increased risk:

- drinking more than 1 – 2 drinks per week
- binge drinking
- dependent on alcohol
- smoking
- other drug use

Ask all pregnant women about alcohol, smoking and other drug use in a non-judgemental way as early as possible and at every visit

Ask about alcohol using the AUDIT-C

1 How often do you have a drink containing alcohol?

2 How many standard drinks of alcohol do you drink on a typical day when you are drinking?

3 How often do you have 6 or more drinks on one occasion?

AUDIT-C Scoring Guide below

Assess smoking and other drug use, including prescription medication. Ask about:

- Frequency
- Quantity
- Pattern of use

Also consider other health indicators of drug use, such as:

- mental health issues or
- blood borne viruses

- Less than 1 – 2 drinks per week
- AUDIT-C score of 0 – 2
- Non-smoker
- Does not use other drugs

- More than 1 – 2 drinks per week
- AUDIT-C score of 3 or greater
- Smoker or recent quitter
- Uses other drugs

- Reinforce healthy behaviours
- Not drinking is the safest option
- Continue to discuss alcohol, smoking and other drug use in routine care

- **Brief intervention**
- **Smoking cessation**
- **Treatment and support**

Next page

AUDIT-C Score	0	1	2	3	4
Question 1	Never	Monthly or less	2 – 4 times per month	2 – 3 times per week	4 + times per week
Question 2	1 – 2	3 – 4	5 – 6	7 – 9	10 +
Question 3	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily or almost daily

Scoring Guide (total points)
3 or greater = increased risk

For further information including Standard Drinks chart, see *Supporting Pregnant Women who use Alcohol or Other Drugs: A Guide for Primary Health Care Professionals*. Available at www.ndarc.med.unsw.edu.au

The Australian Guidelines to Reduce Health Risks from Drinking Alcohol advise that not drinking is the safest option for women who are planning a pregnancy, pregnant or breastfeeding.

Consuming 1 to 2 standard drinks per week is likely to be low risk.

Supporting pregnant women at increased risk

More than 1 – 2 drinks per week, AUDIT-C score of 3 or greater, smoker or uses drugs

Brief intervention

Provide feedback on assessment and discuss risks.

Give non-judgemental advice.

Assist to set goals to reduce alcohol or drug use and to develop personal strategies to achieve goals.

Continue to discuss at each visit as rapport builds and to assess ongoing risks

Smoking cessation

Psychosocial intervention including relapse prevention

Referral to Quitline

Consider Nicotine Replacement Therapy if other intervention not successful

Relapse prevention, including post-partum

Treatment and Support

Refer to a specialist antenatal clinic as early as possible

Refer to drug treatment services if no specialist antenatal clinic available

Consult with specialists as needed (obstetrician, addiction medicine specialist)

Follow up referrals to ensure care is in place

Identify who is responsible for care coordination

Plan for antenatal care and birth

Address nutrition including thiamine and folic acid supplementation

Consider psychosocial needs including mental health issues, domestic violence and child protection

Assertively follow-up baby and mother post-partum

Provide support for breastfeeding and safe sleeping

Provide contraceptive advice as early as possible after birth

For further information including contact details for services see

Supporting Pregnant Women who use Alcohol or Other Drugs: A Guide for Primary Health Care Professionals, available at www.ndarc.med.unsw.edu.au