

Lifestyle issues in Pregnancy

Alcohol

There is no consensus about a “safe limit” because of a lack of scientific evidence. The Department of Health in 2007 said that pregnant women/trying to conceive should avoid drinking alcohol and should not consume more than 1-2 units once or twice a week.

How should I manage pregnant women who may have alcohol problems in pregnancy?

- Use screening tool such as AUDIT
- Offer brief motivational interventions for harmful drinking.
- Refer pregnant dependent drinkers to specialist services

Caffeine

Any caffeine intake can reduce birth weight. This is true in any stage of pregnancy.

Aim for no more than 2 cups of coffee or 4 cups of tea [caffeine is also in fizzy drinks, chocolate etc]

Smoking

Smoking increased the risk of miscarriage and causes growth restriction in the baby. If able to stop before 15 weeks gestation then rates of pre-term delivery and low birth weight are similar to non-smokers. There are benefits of giving up at any stage of pregnancy if continued postpartum because of the long term benefits to mother and baby.