# Cutting out alcohol won’t help fertility, women told

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Researchers found that drinking the equivalent of two glasses of wine every night had little effect on conceptionIAN WEST/PA

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Women who drink heavily are only at a slight risk of infertility and total abstinence may not improve the chances of having a baby, a study has found.

Despite guidelines advising women to give up alcohol if they are trying to get pregnant, researchers in Denmark found that drinking the equivalent of two glasses of wine every night had little effect on conception.

A study of 6,120 women, published in the *BMJ*, found that women who drank 14 or more servings of alcohol a week had the same chance of pregnancy as those who did not drink at all.

However, women who drank more than this amount had an 18 per cent lower chance of getting pregnant, the researchers found.

About one in eight women in Britain experiences difficulties conceiving in the first year of trying. Under government guidelines introduced this year adults in Britain are advised to drink no more than seven glasses of wine, six pints of beer or seven cocktails in a week, due to the health risks associated with alcohol consumption.

Couples who are trying to conceive are warned off alcohol altogether. The guidance states: “If you are pregnant or think you could become pregnant, the safest approach is not to drink alcohol at all, to keep risks to your baby to a minimum.”

“Our study showed that consumption of 14 or more servings of alcohol a week was slightly associated with reduced fecundability, but consumption of lower amounts seemed to have no discernible effect on fertility,” wrote the study’s authors. “Nonetheless, because the foetus may be particularly vulnerable to alcohol during the first few weeks after conception, it would seem prudent for women who are trying to become pregnant to abstain from alcohol until a pregnancy has been ruled out.”

Annie Britton, a reader in epidemiology at University College London, said: “Infertility can be a devastating experience for couples. Millions of women will look for lifestyle modifications, including their alcohol consumption, to improve their chances of having a baby.”

She added: “Given that it can take many months to become pregnant, a woman may choose not to abstain from drinking for the duration. If alcohol is consumed moderately, it seems that this may not affect fertility.”