

News release

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For immediate release

Mums warned of Foetal Alcohol Syndrome

Mothers-to-be are being warned of the damage that can be done by drinking when pregnant as part of Foetal Alcohol Syndrome Awareness Day.

The Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland PCT Cluster is highlighting the effect that drinking alcohol can have on both mother and baby ahead of the awareness day on Friday September 9.

Research shows that drinking while pregnant can put the mother at an increased risk of suffering a miscarriage in the first six months of pregnancy. Women drinking at very high levels during pregnancy are also at risk of their child being born with alcohol withdrawal symptoms. This can lead to the baby being born below the average healthy birth weight and developing slower than baby's whose mums have avoided alcohol.

Priti Raichura, consultant in public health, said: "Women who are trying to conceive should avoid drinking alcohol. Once pregnant if they do choose to drink, to minimise risk to the baby of developing Foetal Alcohol Syndrome and other health complications, they should not drink more than one to two units of alcohol once or twice a week and should not get drunk.

"However, we would recommend that women who are pregnant do not drink at all as they are at a greater risk of damaging their baby's development or even suffering a miscarriage."

Very high exposure to alcohol can cause Foetal Alcohol Syndrome. Those with the illness can be born with facial abnormalities, suffer restricted growth and go on to develop heart defects and learning and behavioural disorders.

For more information on the health effects of alcohol, and safer drinking limits, log on to <http://www.leicestercity.nhs.uk/YourHealth-HealthyLiving-Alcoholawareness.aspx>

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For interviews or more information please contact senior media officer Caroline Higgs on 0116 295 7663 or caroline.higgs@lcr.nhs.uk or media officer Liz Thomas on 0116 295 4123 or liz.thomas@leicestercity.nhs.uk

Notes to Editors:

In October 2010 NHS Leicester City and NHS Leicestershire County and Rutland joined forces to form a 'cluster', in line with the requirements of the Department of Health.

Although we share one Cluster Board and our staff work across the city and county boundaries, we have not legally merged, and retain our separate statutory duties. Together we serve a population of around 1.5m. Cluster formation is an interim stage in the reform of the NHS, involving ongoing transfer of most local commissioning functions to GP-led clinical commissioning groups, in line with the Health and Social Care Bill, now before Parliament.