

ALCOHOL & PREGNANCY:

FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) is a term that describes the effects alcohol can have on a baby when a mother drinks alcohol while pregnant. **FASD** causes **physical deformations, mental retardation, heart defects, and serious behavioral and learning problems.** **FASD** is the leading cause of mental retardation and is **100% preventable.**



Each year around **50,000 BABIES** are born with **ALCOHOL-RELATED damage.**



ALCOHOL AFFECTS UNBORN BABIES

When a woman drinks alcohol, the alcohol enters her blood and reaches the unborn baby (fetus) through the umbilical cord. Alcohol is toxic to a fetus. The fetus has a difficult time processing alcohol. The fetus's blood alcohol content will be much higher and last longer than the mother's. The more the mother drinks, the more harm is done. When a pregnant woman drinks alcohol, her baby does too.

EFFECTS OF FASD

FASD is a series of birth defects that last a lifetime.

- Smaller growth of fetus and/or smaller size at birth
- Smaller size in childhood and adulthood
- Small head, small eyes, cleft palate, short nose, flattened forehead
- Mental retardation, learning, and developmental problems
- Speech and hearing problems
- Heart, liver, kidney and dental defects
- Skeletal defects such as fused bones

BRAIN OF A 6-WEEK-OLD BABY WITH FASD



BRAIN OF A 6-WEEK-OLD BABY

FASD FACTS

- 30-45% of women who are heavy drinkers have children with severe FASD
- Heavy drinkers are **3 times** more likely to miscarry than non-drinkers.
- Risk of miscarriage is double for women who have **2-4 drinks a week.**
- **Two drinks** a week is associated with low birth weight.
- FASD costs the US an estimated **6 billion** each year and cost individuals at least 2 million over a lifetime.

FASD MYTHS

MYTH:

"MY SISTER DRANK WHILE PREGNANT AND HER BABY WAS FINE."

TRUTH:

Some fetuses are more easily hurt by alcohol than others. No one knows which will be most affected. The best choice is to stay away from alcohol when pregnant.

FASD is 100% PREVENTABLE!
The only cause of FASD is **PRENATAL EXPOSURE to alcohol.**

MYTH:

"ONLY ALCOHOLIC MOTHERS HAVE BABIES WITH FASD."

TRUTH:

Even light to medium amounts of drinking can increase the risk of defects or miscarriage.

MYTH:

"I DON'T FEEL PREGNANT. I DON'T LOOK PREGNANT. THE BABY IS TOO SMALL TO BE AFFECTED BY ALCOHOL."

TRUTH:

Some of the most serious damage to the fetus can happen within the first eight weeks of pregnancy — when you may not even know you're pregnant. If you think you're pregnant or are trying to get pregnant, stay away from alcohol.



IF YOU'RE PREGNANT OR WANT TO BE...

- If pregnant, do not drink alcohol.
- Pregnant women who have already consumed alcohol should stop at once.
- If you are considering becoming pregnant, don't drink alcohol.
- There is no safe amount of alcohol to drink while pregnant.

PREGNANT? PUT YOUR BABY FIRST: DON'T DRINK!