

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

1. What is FASD?

The term Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) describes a range of birth defects that can occur in any baby whose birth mother drank alcohol anytime during pregnancy. FASD is not a diagnosis, but refers to a group of conditions. FASD can result in physical, mental, and behavioral problems, as well as learning disabilities.

2. What causes FASD?

FASD can happen only when a pregnant woman consumes alcohol. The alcohol in a pregnant woman's body crosses into the baby's blood, which can damage the brain and lead to an FASD.

3. How is FASD prevented?

FASD is 100% preventable. The only sure way to prevent FASD is to totally avoid alcohol while trying to get pregnant, during pregnancy, or after having unprotected sex when it is possible to get pregnant. Current research shows that no amount of alcohol is sure to be safe to drink at any time during pregnancy.

4. How is FASD diagnosed?

Diagnosing FASD can be difficult. If a mother drinks during pregnancy, being honest about her drinking will help her doctor avoid a wrong diagnosis. Making a diagnosis will result in a better outcome. A doctor can make a diagnosis alone, but may seek opinions from other experts. The best treatment for FASD will involve a range of healthcare professionals.

5. What are the main concerns for parents and family of a child with an FASD?

Parents of children with FASD face unique challenges. A child with an FASD may get into trouble or act out, they may need to be told things many times, and they may do things without understanding the consequences. When they get older, they may not be able to live alone. However, studies have shown that early diagnosis and a stable, positive environment can improve the outlook for people with FASD.

Resources

- <http://www.mofas.org/>
- <http://fasdcenter.samhsa.gov/documents/WYNKeffectsfet us.pdf>
- http://fasdcenter.samhsa.gov/documents/WYNK_Physical_Effects.pdf
- <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/fasd/freematerials.html>
- http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/fasd/documents/fas_guidelines_accessible.pdf
- <http://www.newswise.com/articles/alcohol-binges-early-in-pregnancy-increase-risk-of-infant-oral-clefts>
- <http://www.acog.org/-/media/Departments/Tobacco-Alcohol-and-Substance-Abuse/FASD-Clinician-Guide.pdf>
- <http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/arh25-3/230-234.htm>
- <http://fasdcenter.samhsa.gov/>
- <https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/fetal-alcohol-spectrum-disorders-toolkit/Pages/The-Facts.aspx>

