

What is Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder?

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder includes Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, Fetal Alcohol Effects, Alcohol Related Birth Defects and Alcohol Related Neurodevelopmental Disorders.

FASD is the term used to represent all the harmful effects of alcohol on the unborn child. Prenatal alcohol exposure is now recognized as the leading known cause of disability in Canada. It can cause adaptive and behavioural difficulties, physical, psychological and learning disabilities, and is strongly associated with mental health disorders.

In Canada at least 1-2 babies born out of 100 are affected by alcohol use in pregnancy.



Thunder Bay Site (Main Office)

525 Simpson Street
Thunder Bay, ON P7C 3J6

Tel: (807) 622-8235
Fax: (807) 622-3548

www.norwestchc.org
Email the FASD Coordinator at
mparkes@norwestchc.org

Additional Services

Available From:

F.A.S.I.N.
Fetal Alcohol Support/
Information Network

P.O. Box 100
Murillo, ON P0T 2G0

Tel: (807) 935-3168
Fax: (807) 935-2198

Toll Free 1-866-357-5454



How is the Fetus Affected by Alcohol?

How the fetus is affected by exposure to alcohol depends on many things like:

- How much and how often the mother drinks during the pregnancy
- When in the pregnancy the mother drinks
- How well the mother's body breaks down the alcohol
- The ability of the fetus to handle the alcohol
- The use of other drugs like marijuana, cocaine etc.
- Other factors like the mother's nutrition and smoking habits

Research has shown that the more a woman drinks during pregnancy, the greater the risk for damage to the fetus.

Are there safe times to drink in pregnancy?

Since the fetus is growing all through the pregnancy, alcohol can cause damage at any stage.



Children Born with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder May:

- Have trouble controlling behaviour
- Have attention and memory difficulties
- Have problems seeing and hearing
- Have problems eating and sleeping
- Have poor problem solving skills
- Need medical care all their lives
- Need special teachers and schools
- Display poor judgment
- Have difficulty learning from consequences
- Have certain facial characteristics

Adults with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder May:

- Have difficulty living independently
- Have trouble staying in school
- Have trouble keeping a job
- Have trouble maintaining healthy relationships
- Be involved with the criminal justice system
- Have substance use problems

I'm pregnant now. What can I do?

If you are pregnant and drinking it is never too late to make changes. You can call us if you need to talk to someone or want support.

Can I drink alcohol if I am pregnant?

No one knows for sure how much alcohol is safe for a pregnant woman to drink or how much alcohol it takes to harm an unborn baby. Most doctors, health care providers and researchers agree it's safest not to drink if you are pregnant or thinking about becoming pregnant.

Where can I get more information about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder?

The NorWest Community Health Centres:

- Provides education, support programs and information to individuals and families
- Provides non-medical, comprehensive assessments on fetal alcohol spectrum disorder
- Refers individuals for diagnostic services
- Provides community training and education programs
- Participates in public awareness campaigns through all forms of media
- Makes referrals to other community resources and services
- Partners with Confederation College (Thunder Bay Campus) to provide resource material and information about FASD