

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD)



A mother's alcohol use during pregnancy is one of the top preventable causes of birth defects and developmental disabilities. There is no known amount of alcohol that is safe to drink while pregnant. There is no time during pregnancy when it is safe to drink. When a pregnant woman drinks alcohol, her baby does too.

- ◆ Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can cause many birth defects and developmental disabilities. These are known as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASDs), and included fetal alcohol syndrome.
- ◆ FASDs can cause problems in how a person looks, grows, thinks, and acts. FASDs can also cause birth defects of the heart, brain, and other major organs.
- ◆ FASD is an irreversible, lifelong condition that affects every aspect of a child's life and the lives of the child's family—**there is no cure for FASD.**
- ◆ Alcohol can harm a baby at any time during pregnancy. It can cause problems in the early weeks of pregnancy, before a woman even knows she is pregnant.
- ◆ The good news is that **FASDs are 100% preventable**—if a woman does not drink alcohol while she is pregnant.
- ◆ Be honest with your doctor. Tell him or her how much you are drinking. Your doctor may be able to help you stop drinking before it hurts your baby.
- ◆ Early diagnosis and treatment for FASD can help children reach their fullest potential, lessen secondary disabilities and problems, and help families better understand and cope.

The U.S. Surgeon General wants women to know they should not drink alcohol during pregnancy. In a 2005 advisory on alcohol use in pregnancy, he stated:

- ▶ A pregnant woman should not drink alcohol
- ▶ A pregnant woman who has already used alcohol during her pregnancy should stop right away.
- ▶ A woman who is thinking about getting pregnant should stop using alcohol.
- ▶ Nearly half of all births in the United States are unplanned. Therefore, any woman who could become pregnant should talk to her doctor and take steps to lower the chance of exposing her baby to alcohol.

Raising a child with FASD is 100 times more expensive than preventing FASD in a child.

For more information:

Ohio's FASD Initiative – 800.788.7254 – www.notasingledrop.org
Department of Health and Human Services – www.cdc.gov/ncbddd
Lorain County General Health District – www.loraincountyhealth.com

Sources: **Department of Health & Human Services
Center for Disease Control
Ohio's FASD Initiative, Not a Single Drop**