



Have You Considered...

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders

...in the Individuals that You Serve?



“Of all the substances of abuse (including cocaine, heroin and marijuana), alcohol produces by far the most serious neurobehavioral effects in the fetus.”

-Institute of Medicine's Report to Congress, 1996¹

What are Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders?

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) is the umbrella term used to describe the full range of effects that can occur in an individual whose mother consumed alcohol during pregnancy.²

What are the symptoms of FASD?

- ❖ FASD is a leading known cause of mental retardation and birth defects, with brain damage being the most harmful effect.
- ❖ Physical, behavior and/or learning problems may include:
 - Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder - disorganization, impulsivity, distractibility, hyperactivity
 - Neuromotor Defects - impaired balance and coordination, over/undersensitivity to stimuli
 - Deficiencies in Executive Functioning - impaired ability to judge, plan, empathize, estimate, delay gratification
 - Speech and Language Delays

How many people are affected by FASD?

- ❖ Approximately 1 of 100 people in the United States may have FASD.³ Recent evidence suggests that rate could be as high as 5%.⁴
- ❖ Using the 1% FASD prevalence and California birth data, it is estimated that over 5000 babies are born with FASD in California every year.*
- ❖ Using California's population in 2008, at least 380,000 citizens may be struggling in life because of prenatal exposure to alcohol.⁵

“Although Toni is an excellent reader, she has trouble in math and is a very poor speller. She acts very immature, aggressive, lies, and is crabby. She can't tell time, doesn't understand distance, cities, and concepts.”

-Anna S, parent of a child with FASD⁶

How can FASD be prevented?

- ❖ FASD is 100% preventable if a woman doesn't drink alcohol during pregnancy.¹⁰
- ❖ A fetus' brain is very sensitive to damage from alcohol throughout pregnancy. Most fetal alcohol exposure occurs in the first weeks when there is the greatest risk of causing physical and developmental defects.¹¹
- ❖ Since approximately half of all pregnancies are unplanned,¹² a woman of reproductive age who drinks may unknowingly be exposing a fetus to alcohol.
- ❖ The U.S. Surgeon General urges women who are pregnant or may become pregnant to abstain from alcohol.

Alcohol Consumption Facts:

- ❖ **Among pregnant women:** In 2008, 13% of women reported drinking during the first or third trimester.⁷
- ❖ **Among women of reproductive age:** In 2008, almost 45% of women aged 18-44 reported having had at least one alcoholic drink in the past month; 13% reported drinking 4 or more drinks on at least one occasion.⁸
- ❖ **Among women trying to get pregnant:** In 2006-07, 50% reported drinking in the past month.⁹

What is the societal impact of FASD?

- ❖ According to one study, adverse life outcomes for those affected by FASD include:¹³
 - School suspension
 - Trouble with the law
 - Incarceration and hospitalization
 - Alcohol and drug problems
 - Inappropriate sexual behavior
- ❖ The lifetime cost of one individual with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome** is estimated to be more than \$2 million.¹⁴
 - \$1.6 million - medical treatment, special education and residential care
 - \$0.4 million - productivity losses

*These estimates were calculated using nationwide prevalence rates of FASD. Not adjusted for demographic differences between California and the nation.

**Fetal Alcohol Syndrome represents the severe end of the FASD spectrum and is characterized by abnormal facial features, growth retardation, and central nervous system impairment.

No safe time. No safe amount. If you're pregnant, don't drink. If you drink, don't get pregnant.

Links

- ❖ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/fasd/facts.html>
- ❖ American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
http://www.acog.org/acog_districts/dist_notice.cfm?recno=1&bulletin=2929
- ❖ Preconception Health Council of California
<http://everywomancalifornia.org/>
- ❖ SAMHSA FASD Center for Excellence
<http://fasdcenter.samhsa.gov/>
- ❖ National Association on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
<http://www.nofas.org/>
- ❖ California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs Women's Page
<http://www.adp.ca.gov/women/FASD.shtml>
- ❖ SAMHSA FASD Publications
<http://ncadistore.samhsa.gov/catalog/results.aspx?topic=230&h=drugs>

References

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- ³ May PA and Gossage JP. Estimating the Prevalence of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome: A Summary. *Alcohol Research & Health*. 2001;25(3):159-167.
- ⁴ May PA, Gossage JP, Kalberg WO, et al. Prevalence and Epidemiologic Characteristics of FASD from Various Research Methods with an Emphasis on Recent In-School Studies; *Developmental Disabilities Research Reviews*. 2009;15(3):176-192.
- ⁵ State of California, Department of Finance, *Race/Ethnic Population with Age and Sex Detail, 2000-2050*. Sacramento, CA, July 2007.
- ⁶ S Anna. Life in the FAS Lane. *Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Times: Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/Family Resource Newsletter*. Spring 2008. Available at: <http://fetalalcoholsyndrome.org/fastimes/2008/Spring08.pdf>. Accessed on August 11, 2009.
- ⁷ California Department of Public Health, Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health Program, Maternal Infant Health Assessment (MIHA) Survey, 2008.
- ⁸ California Department of Public Health, California Women's Health Survey, 2008.
- ⁹ California Department of Public Health, California Women's Health Survey, 2006-2007.
- ¹⁰ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASDs). Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/fasd/index.html>. Accessed on August 31, 2010.
- ¹¹ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of Applied Studies. *The NSDUH Report: Substance Use among Women During Pregnancy and Following Childbirth*. Rockville, MD; May 21, 2009.
- ¹² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Preconception Care Questions and Answers. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/preconception/QandA.htm>. Accessed on August 31, 2010.
- ¹³ Streissguth AP, Bookstein FL, Barr HM, Sampson PD, O'Malley K, Young, JK. Risk Factors for Adverse Life Outcomes in Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Fetal Alcohol Effects. *Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics*. 2004;25(4):228-238.
- ¹⁴ Lupton C, Burd L, Harwood R. Cost of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders. *American Journal of Medical Genetics Part C*. 2004;127C:42-50.