WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDERS (FASDs)



WHAT ARE FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDERS?

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASDs) are a group of conditions that can happen when a person has been exposed to alcohol while in the womb. Because of the exposure, individuals born with FASDs can experience physical and mental problems.[1]

HOW DOES DRINKING ALCOHOL CAUSE FASDs?

When a woman drinks alcohol while pregnant, the alcohol passes through the bloodstream, through the placenta, and to the umbilical cord of the baby. Unlike the mother, who is able to process alcohol through her liver, the baby cannot process the alcohol because the liver is one of the last organs to fully develop.[1,2,4]

WHAT ARE COMMON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF FASDs?

FASDs can include symptoms like:

- Hyperactivity
- Lack of concentration
- Abnormal physical features such as a small head size, low body weight, and abnormal facial features
- Hearing and vision problems
- Intellectual and behavioral disabilities
- Difficulty with reasoning and judgment
- Problems with the kidneys, bones, or heart[3]

HOW CAN YOU PREVENT FASDs?

The best way to prevent FASDs is to not drink alcohol at all while pregnant. No amount of alcohol, or any type of alcohol, has been proven safe to consume during any stage of pregnancy. Even a small amount of alcohol exposure can cause health defects in the baby. Stop drinking alcohol immediately if you find out that you are pregnant.

If you can't stop drinking alcohol, consult your primary care physician, who can refer you to a specialist that knows about FASDs. You can also contact your local alcohol treatment center.

NO AMOUNT OF ALCOHOL IS SAFE, SO DON'T RISK IT.

Sources

1. https://www.cdc.gov/fasd/

2. https://www.brainfacts.org/diseases-and-disorders/childhood-disorders/2018/what-is-fetal-alcohol-syndrome,-and-how-does-it-affect-the-brain-082318

3. https://www.cdc.gov/fasd/about/

4. https://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/keeping-well/drinking-alcohol-while-pregnant/

DN'T RISK IT

THINK BEFORE YOU DRINK

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BHDD SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities

DSS SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT of SOCIAL SERVICES