

FACT SHEET

Alcohol & Pregnancy

Alcohol Use and Pregnancy

- Wisconsin leads the nation in drinking by women of childbearing age (18 – 44 year olds).
- 24 percent of Wisconsin women aged 18-44 binge drink.
- 32 percent of pregnant women in the state report drinking alcohol during pregnancy.
- Each year approximately 150 - 200 Wisconsin babies are negatively affected by prenatal alcohol exposure.

Source: Wisconsin Bureau of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, 2001 BRFSS Data

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders

- When a pregnant woman drinks alcohol her baby can develop a range of permanent physical, cognitive, and/or behavioral problems— often called fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD).
- FASD is an umbrella term used to describe the range of effects associated with prenatal alcohol exposure—it is not a diagnosis.
- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) is one medical condition caused by drinking alcohol during pregnancy.
- Individuals with FAS have brain damage, are small in size, and have facial abnormalities.
- Other diagnoses associated with maternal drinking include partial FAS (formally referred to as fetal alcohol effects or FAE), alcohol-related neurodevelopmental disorder (ARND), and alcohol-related birth defects (ARBD).

- There is no known safe amount of alcohol to use during pregnancy.
- There is no known safe time to drink alcohol during pregnancy.
- There is no known safe kind of alcohol to drink during pregnancy.
- However, it is never too late to stop drinking during pregnancy.
- Call the Healthy Choices Project at 1-800-752-3157 for more information and/or a referral to services.

If you are pregnant, or could become pregnant, don't drink alcohol. This includes beer, wine, wine coolers, mixed drinks, and shots.

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Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS)

- Fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) is a combination of physical and cognitive problems that occur in some individuals prenatally exposed to alcohol.
- Individuals with FAS have deficits in three areas: central nervous system problems, growth retardation, and classic facial malformations.
- The central nervous system (CNS) deficits associated with prenatal exposure to alcohol include poor fine and gross motor coordination and a range of cognitive disabilities including learning disabilities, mental retardation, developmental disabilities, speech and language deficits, memory and processing problems, and attention problems.
- The growth deficits associated with prenatal exposure to alcohol include prenatal growth retardation; birth weight, length, and head circumference below the 10th percentile; and postnatal growth retardation.
- The facial malformations associated with prenatal exposure to alcohol include small eye openings (short palpebral fissures), a flat ridge between the mouth and nose (indistinct philtrum), and a thin upper lip (vermillion).
- Individuals with FASD often need lifelong services including educational, vocational, residential, and/or social supports.



Photo: Children with FAS
(used with permission from Paula Kramer)



Photo: Adult with FAS (used with permission from Teresa Kellerman/
www.come-over.to/FASCRC)

For more information contact the **Healthy Choices Project**
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