

AN ALCOHOL-FREE PREGNANCY
IS THE BEST CHOICE FOR YOUR BABY

When a pregnant woman drinks alcohol, so does her baby. Why take the risk?

**INTERNATIONAL FASD AWARENESS DAY
SEPTEMBER 9, 2015**



“Pregnancy and alcohol don’t mix. Why take the risk?”

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Dear Colleague:

September 9 is celebrated annually as International FASD Awareness Day to promote education and awareness efforts on FASD. FASDs are completely preventable by abstaining from alcohol while pregnant. Despite myths, there is no scientific evidence available that sets a “safe” amount of alcohol that will not affect the developing fetus.

To celebrate this year, the American Academy of Pediatrics; The Arc of the United States; CDC-funded FASD Practice and Implementation Centers, National Partners, and CHOICES Partners; National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (NOFAS); and NOFAS State Affiliate Network have joined together to produce this packet of materials to assist you in planning your events.

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Let us know what you think about the packet and how you’re using it by [completing our feedback form](#). You may leave your name and contact information if you wish for a response or you may remain anonymous.

If you have questions about the materials presented in this packet or about International FASD Awareness Day, please contact Carolyn Edney (cedney@casat.org) at the Mountain Plains FASD Practice and Implementation Center.

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WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Share the fact sheet information with your contacts to help raise awareness about the dangers of drinking alcohol during pregnancy.
- Use the press release/sample article in your media messages, and through your distribution lists, newsletters and other communication channels to raise awareness of International FASD Awareness Day on September 9, 2015.
- Use the tips in this packet to get a proclamation from your State official recognizing September 9 as FASD Awareness Day (sample proclamation included).
- Use the social media messages in the packet to raise awareness of this topic on and around September 9. Use the hashtag #FASDay to follow each other's messages.
- Download or order new materials from CDC on the risks of alcohol use during pregnancy and FASDs to use in community events.
- Let's work together to spread the word about FASDs and the risks of alcohol use during pregnancy by sharing our FASD Awareness Day activities! NOFAS will be posting everyone's events on their website so please send information through [this online form](#) on what your community is planning to do for FASD Awareness Day. Your ideas can help others in their planning.

Let us know what you think about the packet and how you're using it by [completing our feedback form](#). You may leave your name and contact information if you wish for a response or you may remain anonymous.

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FACT SHEET

- When a woman drinks alcohol, so does her baby.
- There is no known safe amount of alcohol use during pregnancy.
- There is no safe time during pregnancy to drink alcohol.
- All types of alcohol are equally harmful, including all wine and beer.
- When a pregnant woman drinks alcohol, so does her baby.
- Avoiding alcohol while pregnant will absolutely guarantee that a child will not have a condition along the continuum of fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs).
- An estimated 40,000 babies are born each year with FASDs, which can result in birth defects, intellectual or learning disabilities, behavior problems, and trouble learning life skills.
- FASD-related difficulties last a lifetime.
- About half of pregnancies in the U.S. are unplanned.
- A woman may not realize she is pregnant up to 4 to 6 weeks in pregnancy and expose her baby to alcohol before she knows she is pregnant.
- Women who are not trying to get pregnant but are having sex should talk with their health care provider about using contraception consistently.
- Pregnant women and women trying to get pregnant should abstain from drinking alcohol.
- Pregnant women and women trying to get pregnant should get help if they cannot stop drinking. Women are encouraged to contact their healthcare provider, local Alcoholics Anonymous, or local alcohol treatment center.
- Pregnant women or women trying to get pregnant should talk with their obstetrician, pediatrician, nurses and other health care providers to understand the risks and to make the best choices for the health of their baby.

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SAMPLE NEWS RELEASE/NEWSLETTER ARTICLE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 9, 2015

Contact: (name of person submitting release)
(phone here) – or – (email here)

(your city, your state) – (your organization) is joining the cause to increase awareness of the risks of drinking alcohol while pregnant. The U.S. Surgeon General advises pregnant women and women who are considering becoming pregnant to abstain from alcohol consumption to eliminate alcohol-exposed pregnancies (FASDs),¹ yet it is estimated that 40,000 babies are born each year with FASDs, which describe a range of effects that can happen to a fetus when a woman drinks alcohol during her pregnancy.²

FASDs are caused by a woman drinking alcohol during pregnancy. Alcohol in the mother's blood passes to the baby through the placenta and the umbilical cord. When a woman drinks alcohol so does her baby. There is no known safe amount or type of alcohol to drink during pregnancy. There is also no safe time to drink during pregnancy, including before a woman knows she is pregnant. FASDs can impact children's physical, mental, behavioral, or cognitive development. The most recognized condition along the continuum of FASDs, fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS), is characterized by growth deficiencies, central nervous system disabilities, and specific facial characteristics, and is the most preventable form of intellectual disability. The number of children born with FAS alone is comparable to spina bifida or Down syndrome.³

To prevent FASDs, a woman should not drink alcohol while she is pregnant or if she might be pregnant. This is because a woman often does not know she is pregnant for up to 4 to 6 weeks after conception. In the United States, nearly half of all pregnancies are unplanned. If a woman is drinking alcohol during pregnancy, it is never too late to stop drinking. Because brain growth takes place throughout pregnancy, the sooner a woman stops drinking the safer it will be for her and her baby.

Human service organizations, health care professionals, educators, and the public are called to action to work together to reduce the occurrence of FASDs by increasing awareness, becoming educated, and improving public health efforts about the message that women who are pregnant or who might be pregnant should abstain from alcohol.

For more information on alcohol use during pregnancy and FASDs, visit www.cdc.gov/fasd [or insert local organization here].

"Pregnancy and alcohol don't mix. Why take the risk?"

¹US Department of Health and Human Services. US Surgeon General releases advisory on alcohol use in pregnancy. Washington, DC: US Department of Health and Human Services; 2005. Available at <https://wayback.archive-it.org/3926/20140421162517/http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/news/2005/02/sg02222005.html>. Accessed July 1, 2014.

²May PA & Gossage JP. Estimating the prevalence of fetal alcohol syndrome: A summary. *Alcohol Research & Health* 2001;25(3):159-167.

³Bertrand J, Floyd RL, Weber MK, O'Connor M, Riley EP, Johnson KA, Cohen DE, NTFAS/E. *Fetal Alcohol Syndrome: Guidelines for Referral and Diagnosis*. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; 2004.

⁴Kesmodel US, Bertrand J, Støvring H, Skarpness B, Denny CH, Mortensen EL, and the Lifestyle During Pregnancy Study Group. The effect of different alcohol drinking patterns in early to mid pregnancy on the child's intelligence, attention, and executive function. *BJOG* 2012;119(10):1180-1190.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE PROCLAMATION

What is a proclamation?

A proclamation is an official form of recognition issued by a state's governor to call attention to a specific cause or event. The public may request a proclamation; state officials review, and the governor makes a decision whether to issue a proclamation based on the review. Governors throughout the U.S. have issued proclamations recognizing FASD Awareness Day; some examples can be found [here](#).

How to Get a Proclamation from Your State Official^{1,2}

Step 1: Research the Proclamation Process in Your State or Community

- Find your state Governor's contact information on the Internet by searching for "Governor of (your state)". You can also check [this website](#) to find state contacts for proclamation requests.
- Find out the process to request a proclamation and determine your timeline. Many state offices need at least eight weeks to process a proclamation.
- If you know of other groups in your state interested in obtaining a proclamation, it might be helpful to work together. Only one proclamation per state will be issued for all to use.

Step 2: Create Your Documents and Contact Your Public Officials

- Write a cover letter to the Governor expressing your desire to have the proclamation issued and include a copy of your proclamation. You may use the proclamation template included in this packet or you may create your own. Once drafted, submit your proclamation. Depending on the process in your state, a proclamation might be submitted through the Governor's website, mailed via USPS, e-mailed, or hand delivered to your Governor's office.

Step 3: Follow-up

- Follow-up with an email or a telephone call one week after you send the original request.
- Offer to meet with staff in-person to answer any questions they may have.
- Be sure to ask that the proclamation be placed on the Governor's web site. It would be a good idea to see if you can get the proclamation placed on your state representatives' websites as well.
- Write a thank you note to the Governor and your local representatives.

Publicize Your Proclamation³

- Write a press release and send it to the media (e.g. local newspapers, radio stations, and TV news channels). You may edit the press release included in this packet to incorporate information on why the proclamation was issued and who issued it. You may also want to include quotes from the government official signing the proclamation in the press release.
- Hold a news conference or public event when the proclamation is signed, inviting the media to cover this event.
- Share the proclamation with local organizations, government officials, colleagues, and other social networks and request that they display the proclamation on their websites, social media accounts, or in their offices.

¹How to Get a Proclamation from your Governor - First Candle. (n.d.). *First Candle*. Retrieved June 16, 2014, from <http://www.firstcandle.org/october-is-awareness-month/awareness-month-action-center/advocacy/now-to-get-a-proclamation-from-your-governor/>

²Get an Official Proclamation. (n.d.). RSS. Retrieved June 16, 2014, from <http://www.freetobreathe.org/get-involved/educate-your-community/get-an-official-proclamation>

³Publicize Your Proclamation. (n.d.). RSS. Retrieved June 16, 2014, from <http://www.freetobreathe.org/get-involved/educate-your-community/publicize-your-proclamation>

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SAMPLE PROCLAMATION

Human service organizations, health care professionals, educators, and the public are called to action to work together to reduce the occurrence of fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs). This can be done by increasing awareness and improving public health efforts in the delivery of the preventive health message that women who are pregnant or who might be pregnant should abstain from drinking alcohol. In addition to this message, we must increase awareness on how FASDs may present in individuals across the lifespan and the ongoing need for services and support for individuals living with FASDs.

Whereas, The term “fetal alcohol spectrum disorders” (FASDs) is an umbrella term that describes the range of effects that can occur in a baby whose mother drank alcohol during pregnancy; with fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) being the most involved condition along the spectrum; and

Whereas, Prenatal alcohol exposure is the leading preventable cause of birth defects and intellectual and developmental disabilities; and

Whereas, The exact number of people who have FASDs is unknown, but it is estimated that about 40,000 babies are born with effects of prenatal alcohol exposure annually; and

Whereas, The lifetime cost for one individual with FAS is estimated to be \$2 million, with a combined cost to the United States for FAS alone over \$4 billion annually; and

Whereas, 7.6% of pregnant women (or 1 in 13) and 51.5% of non-pregnant women (or 1 in 2) report drinking alcohol in the past 30 days; and

Whereas, About half of all pregnancies are unplanned, contributing to late entry into prenatal care and presenting a barrier to optimal pregnancy management, particularly during the crucial early weeks of embryonic development; and

Whereas, The good health and well-being of the people of *(name of your state)* are enhanced by the support of a national effort to educate about and prevent FASDs; and

Whereas, The *(organization)* and the *(organization)* join with the *(partner organization)* as well as many dedicated volunteers, health care professionals, educators, and parent groups by participating in this promotion.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, *(Governor’s name)*, Governor of the state of *(name of your state)*, do hereby declare September 9, 2015 as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Awareness Day and pledge to continue to partner with organizations, health care professionals, educators, and the public to raise awareness about our unified message:

“Pregnancy and alcohol don’t mix. Why take the risk?”

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SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGES

The following includes messages about fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs) that can be displayed via social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) on International FASD Awareness Day - September 9, 2015. For other materials that can be used online, such as web banners and website buttons, please refer to the *CDC Materials* section of this packet.

The messages listed below are under 140 characters and can be used as a Twitter post. You may combine these messages for other social media sites that allow for longer posts, such as Facebook and Instagram. **Use the hashtag #FASDay on all posts in order to spread the message that alcohol and pregnancy don't mix.** For tips on using social media, refer to the CDC publication, *The Health Communicator's Social Media Toolkit*. For specific help on how to tweet, visit the [Twitter Help Center](#).

1. There is no known safe amount of alcohol to drink during pregnancy or while trying to get pregnant. #FASDay <http://1.usa.gov/Q7BNal>
2. Alcohol use during pregnancy can also lead to miscarriage, stillbirth, & SIDS. #FASDay <http://1.usa.gov/Q7hytl>
3. The best advice is to stop drinking alcohol when you start trying to get pregnant. #FASDay <http://1.usa.gov/Q7hytl>
4. When a pregnant woman drinks alcohol, so does her baby. #FASDay <http://1.usa.gov/1hCpMV2>
5. Baby's brain, body, & organs are developing throughout pregnancy & can be affected by alcohol at any time. #FASDay
6. Drinking any type of alcohol can cause FASDs. This includes all wine, beer, & mixed drinks. #FASDay <http://1.usa.gov/Q7BNal>
7. FASDs are completely preventable if a woman does not drink during pregnancy. Why take the risk? #FASDay <http://1.usa.gov/1hCpMV2>
8. Identifying & intervening w/ children w/ FASDs early can help them reach their full potential. #FASDay <http://1.usa.gov/Q7hytl>
9. Alcohol screening & counseling is recommended for all adults, incl. pregnant women. #FASDay <http://go.usa.gov/ZvvQ>
10. If you are unable to stop drinking, talk to your health care provider. Resources are available to help. #FASDay <http://1.usa.gov/Q7BNal>

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RESOURCES FOR PREVENTING FASD AND FAMILIES LIVING WITH FASDs

The following list of resources offers a starting place for those seeking information and support.

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) FASD Toolkit for pediatric primary care clinicians was developed to serve as the framework for the medical home management for children with FASDs. The toolkit provides tools and resources for primary care clinicians to equip them to better meet the special needs of these children and families.

FASD Toolkit for Pediatric Primary Care Clinicians

www.aap.org/fasd

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists has developed resources for women's health care providers in identifying women who drink too much and in providing brief educational counseling to reduce or eliminate alcohol use. Resources include a cell phone app, downloadable patient information sheets, current news articles, treatment referral information, and more.

FASD Informational Page

http://www.acog.org/About_ACOG/ACOG_Districts/District_II/Fetal_Alcohol_Spectrum_Disorders

iPhone App – Identifying Women Who Drink at Risky or Hazardous Levels

<http://www.womenandalcohol.org/>

The Arc of the United States

The goal of The Arc's FASD Prevention Project is to increase health care provider knowledge of the risks alcohol can pose to a fetus and encourage the use of FASD prevention strategies and provide educational opportunities to health care providers.

FASD Prevention Project

<http://www.thearc.org/FASD-Prevention-Project>

FASD Prevention Toolkit for Health Care Providers

<http://www.thearc.org/FASD-Prevention-Project/resources/toolkit>

Free Continuing Education Credit for Health Care Providers

<http://www.thearc.org/FASD-Prevention-Project/resources/courses>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) works to prevent alcohol use during pregnancy by conducting research studies and implementing and disseminating evidence-based interventions (e.g., alcohol screening and brief intervention and CHOICES) for women at risk of an alcohol-exposed pregnancy. CDC also supports education and training activities for various audiences. For example, CDC funds FASD Practice and Implementation Centers and national partner organizations to achieve practice and systems-level change by improving the knowledge and skills of health care professionals regarding the prevention, identification, and management of FASDs.

CDC FASD Main Page

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/fasd/index.html>

Free FASD Materials

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<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/fasd/freematerials.html>

Alcohol Screening & Brief Intervention

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/fasd/alcohol-screening.html>

CHOICES Intervention

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/fasd/research-preventing.html>

FASD Practice and Implementation Centers and National Partners

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/fasd/training.html>

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome: Support, Training, Advocacy, and Resources (FASSTAR)

Offers training on all aspects of FASDs, including community awareness, prevention, and intervention. The FAS Community Resource Center (FASCRC), supported by FASSTAR, includes information on the history of FASD Awareness Day.

<http://fasstar.com/>

<http://www.come-over.to/FASCRC/>

March of Dimes

The March of Dimes helps expecting mothers to take charge of their health and to have full-term, healthy pregnancies.

Alcohol Use During Pregnancy

<http://www.marchofdimes.com/pregnancy/alcohol-during-pregnancy.aspx>

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)

NIAAA supports and conducts biomedical and behavioral research on the causes, consequences, treatment, and prevention of alcoholism and alcohol-related problems. This site has publications and information including the brochures, *Drinking and Your Pregnancy* and *Alcohol: A Women's Health Issue* which are available in English and Spanish.

<http://www.niaaa.nih.gov>

National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (NOFAS)

Founded in 1990, NOFAS is an international nonprofit organization committed solely to FASD primary prevention, advocacy, and support. They have created many resources including resource directories, a weekly listserv, and the Circle of Hope Birth Mother's Network.

National and State Resource Directory

<http://www.nofas.org/resource-directory/>

Affiliate Network

<http://www.nofas.org/affiliates-partners/>

Weekly Roundup Listserv

<http://www.nofas.org/weekly-roundup/>

Circle of Hope Birth Mothers' Network

<http://www.nofas.org/circleofhope/>

SAMHSA FASD Center for Excellence

The SAMHSA FASD Center for Excellence was launched in 2001 with the mission to facilitate the development and improvement of prevention, treatment, and care systems in the United States by providing national leadership and facilitating collaboration in the field with regards to FASDs.

<http://fasdcenter.samhsa.gov/>

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Other Resources

do2Learn FASD Teacher Toolbox

<http://www.do2learn.com/disabilities/FASDtoolbox/index.htm>

Double ARC

<http://www.doublearc.org/>

FASLink: Fetal Alcohol Disorders Society – Research, Information, Support & Communications

<http://www.acbr.com/fas/>

FAS Diagnostic & Prevention Network

<http://depts.washington.edu/fasdnpn/htmls/fasd-fas.htm>

FASD Online Support Groups and Mail Lists

<http://www.come-over.to/FAS/fasonline.htm>

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Outreach Project

<http://www.faseout.ca/eng/training.htm>

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Consultation, Education and Training Services, Inc.

<http://www.fascets.org/index.html>

Recovery.org – Addiction Recovery Program Finder

<http://www.recovery.org/>

SAMHSA Substance Abuse Treatment Facility Locator

<http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/>

University of Washington Health Sciences Administration– Fetal Alcohol and Drug Unit

<http://depts.washington.edu/fadu/>

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CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION MATERIALS

Partners: Help us spread the word – Pregnancy and alcohol don't mix. Why take the risk?

Free materials are available to help you promote alcohol-free pregnancies to women in your communities. CDC has developed materials for women of childbearing age on alcohol use during pregnancy and FASDs based on formative research findings. The materials target women who are pregnant and women who are trying to get pregnant.*



The set of materials includes print products (a brochure and three posters) that are available to order and downloadable. Several social media tools, such as banners, badges, and e-cards are also available.

To learn more about all of the tools available from CDC that can be used in community efforts, and how to access them, please visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/fasd/partners-tools.html>

*For information and materials on preconception health for all women and men, whether or not they plan to have a baby one day, visit CDC's Preconception Health and Health Care website.