What is Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)?

FASD is an umbrella term describing a range of conditions and disabilities that can occur in an individual whose mother drank alcohol during pregnancy. While the effects of FASD can be life long, the good news is that it is the only birth defect that is 100% preventable.

Prenatal exposure to alcohol at any time during pregnancy can alter the development of the baby’s brain. Symptoms of FASD can emerge as the child grows up and can impact behavior, learning, communicating, vision and hearing.

Only trained professionals can make a diagnosis. FASD is often misdiagnosed because many of the characteristics look the same as other mental health disorders.

Avoid drinking alcohol if you plan on getting pregnant, suspect you may be pregnant, or know you are pregnant. If you learn you are pregnant and have already used alcohol, eliminating ongoing use during your pregnancy can lead to reduced risk of your baby having FASD.

If you or someone you know is struggling with alcohol or drug misuse, call 1-800-563-4086 or go to drugfreect.org for information and referrals.

If you would like more materials on FASD or NAS contact the Connecticut Clearinghouse. info@ctclearinghouse.org

Experts estimate that the full range of FASDs among 6-7 year old children might be as high as 2 to 5 out of 100 school children (or 2% to 5% of the population).

www.cdc.gov
National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities Division of Congenital and Developmental Disorders
**What is Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS)?**

NAS is a group of symptoms caused when a newborn baby has been exposed to opioids, or other drugs, in the womb before birth. These drugs pass through the placenta during pregnancy.

Once the baby is born, withdrawal symptoms may become visible, usually within the first three days of life. Every baby is different and may require different interventions. The medical team, in partnership with the baby’s mom, will provide the appropriate care to help the baby safely recover.

If a woman has an opioid use disorder, Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) may be a helpful resource. It can help mom enter into recovery, support baby safely during pregnancy and lead to the best possible outcomes for the family after delivery.

**NAS Resources**

- adoption.com/what-you-need-to-know-about-adopting-a-child-with-neonatal-abstinence-syndrome NAS and adoption
- marchofdimes.org/advocacy/neonatal-abstinence-syndrome.aspx NAS fact sheet
- mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/heroin/NAS fact sheet

**Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Resources**

**Comprehensive Resources for Parents and Caregivers of a child with FASD.**

- fasstar.com Fetal Alcohol Syndrome: Support, Training, Advocacy and Resources
- nofas.org National Organization of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
- ctclearinghouse.org Connecticut Clearinghouse

**Additional Resources**

- birth23.org Birth to Three: Provides developmental evaluations of young children.
- cdc.gov/ncbddd/fasd A comprehensive online resource for parents/caregivers of a child with FASD.
- health.hawaii.gov Booklet for parents and caregivers of children with FASD, ages 3-12 years.
- kidshealth.org/en/parents/fas Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
- proofalliance.org Raising children with FASD guide.
- nofasd.org.au FASD characteristics across the lifespan.
- ct.gov/dmhas Learn more about treatment for mental health, substance use disorders and MAT.
- ctaddictionservices.com DMHAS real-time bed availability for substance use disorder treatment.

**Resources on Additional Substances**

**Tobacco**

- cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/s Health effects of smoking and secondhand smoke.
- mombaby.org Secondhand smoke and newborns.
- nofas.org Prenatal exposure to tobacco, marijuana, opioids and other substances.

**Marijuana**

- cdc.gov/marijuana/fact-sheets What you need to know about marijuana use and pregnancy.
- drugabuse.gov/publications/research Can marijuana use during pregnancy harm the baby?
- marchofdimes.org/pregnancy/marijuana.aspx Pregnancy and marijuana.