



Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder



What is it?

Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD)

A diagnostic term used to describe the range of mental and physical effects on the developing unborn baby that are caused by drinking alcohol during pregnancy.

Some effects include: brain damage and poor growth to birth defects and learning problems.

Is it preventable?

FASD can be prevented by not drinking alcohol during pregnancy. There is no safe period at which alcohol can be consumed during pregnancy. Additionally, women who are planning to have a baby, are pregnant or breast feeding, the safest choice is not to drink alcohol.



The role of men in supporting women who are pregnant or breastfeeding to avoid alcohol during pregnancy and breastfeeding is also vital.

At a community level, FASD can be prevented by promoting awareness of the harmful effects of consuming alcohol while pregnant, reducing unplanned pregnancies through the use of contraception and reducing the ready availability of alcohol.

"The effects of FASD are life-long. However, there are a range of strategies to improve the long term outcomes for individuals and families affected by FASD"

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Observe: avoid situations which can trigger difficult behavior

Structure: provide a safe and structured environment

Consistency: maintain a regular routine and time table

Repetition: repeat information and instructions regularly

Simplify: one instruction at a time

Rewards: reward positive behaviour when it happens

Supervision: children with FASD need close monitoring

Modelling: allow them to observe positive social interactions and provide the opportunity to practise social skills.



Statistics



"FASD is not unique to Indigenous communities in Australia."

"2008 NATSISS on alcohol consumption during pregnancy found that 80% of mothers of Indigenous children aged 0-3 years did not drink during pregnancy, 16% drank less, and 3.3% drank more or the same amount of alcohol during their pregnancy."

"High rates of FASD in some remote communities with the number of cases diagnosed at 120 per 1000 for children born between 2002 and 2003."

