

LET ALONE
HAVE A
BABY WITH

*fetal alcohol
syndrome*

Visit our web address at:
www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/fas
or call: 1-800-CDC-INFO
or email: cdcinfo@cdc.gov

I NEVER
THOUGHT
I'D GET

pregnant

Unprotected Sex + Alcohol = Alcohol-Affected Babies

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**WHAT IS
FETAL
ALCOHOL
SYNDROME?**



Fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) is the name given to a group of physical and mental birth defects caused by a woman drinking heavily during pregnancy.

Babies born with FAS have abnormal facial features and can be mentally retarded. They have problems with learning, memory, attention span, problem solving, speech, and hearing. They can also have problems in school and problems relating to others. FAS cannot be cured. But it is 100% preventable—if a woman does not drink while she is pregnant.

*I use birth control most of the time.
So I didn't think I would get pregnant.
And I don't drink that often—
just when I go out with my friends.
I never dreamed that could be harmful—
until I found out I was pregnant.*

**EVEN IF
YOU'RE NOT
A HEAVY
DRINKER**



You don't have to be a heavy drinker to have a baby affected by alcohol. Even if you only drink socially, when you go out with friends, if you're having unprotected sex, you can still be at risk for getting pregnant and having a baby with alcohol-related effects. Children with alcohol-related effects don't have the full symptoms of FAS, but they may have learning disabilities and behavior problems. You may be able to handle the alcohol—but the baby that you may be carrying can't.

**EVEN
BEFORE
YOU KNOW
YOU'RE
PREGNANT**



Of course, most women don't drink when they're pregnant. But that's not always enough. Research shows that the baby can be hurt by alcohol during any part of the pregnancy, including the first month or two. And most women don't know they're pregnant until the second month...and sometimes even later.

So they drink. And by the time they find out they're pregnant, it might be too late.

**IF YOU'RE
HAVING
UNPROTECTED
SEX,**



CUT IT OUT.

Here's the good news: FAS and other alcohol-related effects can be stopped completely if a woman doesn't drink while she is pregnant. So what can you do? If you drink and are sexually active, use birth control *all the time*.

And if you are trying to get pregnant or think you might be pregnant—even if there's just a chance—stop drinking *right away*. Don't wait until you know for sure, because by the time you know you're pregnant, your baby could already be harmed by the alcohol—*for life*.

**ASK
AN
EXPERT**

If you'd like to learn more about fetal alcohol syndrome and other alcohol-related effects, speak to your own doctor or nurse or family planning clinic.

**ALCOHOL AND
UNPROTECTED
SEX**

don't mix