

866-
STOPFAS

**Pregnancy
is
Sacred**

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The **Power** of Our
YOUTH

Help your community
have healthy babies

YOUTH

You've probably heard that alcohol is bad for you. But did you know it can hurt people even before they're born? Every year, at least 40,000 babies are born with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders, or FASD.*

What Is FASD?

"FASD" is a term that describes the range of effects that can occur in someone whose mother drank alcohol during pregnancy.

Children whose mothers drank during pregnancy may need surgeries to fix physical problems. They may also have brain damage that can make it hard to remember things or solve problems. They may not be able to follow simple instructions or form friendships. These challenges may make it difficult to focus in school or follow everyday routines.

What Do I Need To Know About FASD?

- FASD is permanent. It cannot be cured.
- FASD is 100 percent preventable. If a woman doesn't drink when she's pregnant, her baby will not have an FASD.
- No amount of alcohol is known to be safe during pregnancy.
- One type of alcohol is not safer than another. Beer and wine are just as harmful as hard liquor.
- If a pregnant woman stops drinking as soon as possible, she can improve her chances of having a healthy baby.
- People with an FASD can grow, improve, and succeed in life with the right support.

What Can I Do To Prevent FASD?

You and your friends will be the leaders of tomorrow. Your families, tribes, and communities are counting on you. You can help make your community stronger by working to prevent FASD.

The best way to prevent FASD is not to drink when you're pregnant. (Drinking while nursing can also cause harm to a baby's health.) You can share this message with your mother, sisters, female friends, and other girls and women you know: If you're pregnant (or nursing), don't drink.

Guys may think preventing FASD isn't their job since they can't get pregnant. But they can help the girls and women in their lives avoid alcohol. If the guys around them aren't drinking, the women will be less likely to drink.

Who Can I Talk to About FASD?

There are people in your community that you can talk to about FASD. This is only a partial list. You might know of other places and people.

- Science, biology, and other teachers
- Staff at Indian Health Service, tribal, and other clinics and hospitals
- Alcohol and drug treatment centers
- Head Start programs
- Parents and other relatives
- Tribal and community leaders
- Spiritual leaders

One person can make a difference. You can share information about FASD and spread the word that pregnancy is sacred and pregnant women need to be alcohol free.

If you feel comfortable doing this, encourage your teacher to teach your class about FASD. Then share what you know with friends and family members, especially girls and women who drink.

How Do I Talk To Someone About FASD?

FASD is a sensitive subject and isn't easy to talk about. Here are some tips to help you figure out what to say and how to say it:

- Be respectful. Don't call anyone "dumb," "stupid," or other insulting names.
- Be positive and encouraging.
- Talk in a private place.
- Keep it simple—start with the basics.
- Listen carefully.
- Suggest places to get more information or help.
- Offer your help and support.

Where Can I Learn More?

For more information, check your local library or school library for books and other materials on alcohol and pregnancy. Many Web sites also have information and materials. A good place to start is www.fasdcenter.samhsa.gov or www.stopalcoholabuse.gov.

What Now?

Now that you know more about FASD, you can help your tribe or community have healthy babies. Using the power of information, you can make smart choices and help keep future generations healthy.

* May, P.A., and Gossage, J.P. 2001. Estimating the prevalence of fetal alcohol syndrome: A summary. *Alcohol Research & Health* 25(3):159-167.