

FICTION OR FACT?

FICTION: FASD is a childhood disorder, people outgrow it.

FACT: The damage caused by prenatal exposure to alcohol is permanent.

FICTION: FASD can be passed on genetically.

FACT: Unlike genetic disorders, FASD has a direct behavioral cause.

FICTION: Children are negatively affected by alcohol only if a mother drinks early in her pregnancy.

FACT: Alcohol can affect an unborn baby at anytime during the pregnancy. There is no 100% safe time or amount to drink during pregnancy.

FICTION: FASD is specific to certain races or communities.

FACT: The damaging effects of prenatal alcohol exposure happen in all races and communities if women drink when they are pregnant.



ONLY YOU CAN PREVENT FASD!

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) is the leading known cause of preventable mental retardation. It can also cause birth defects and learning and behavioral disorders.

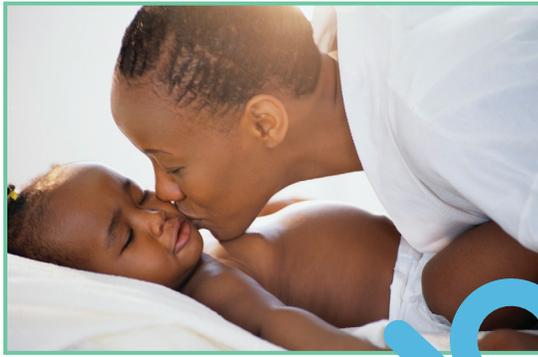
In Mississippi, more than 450 babies are born each year with FASD.



Mississippi Advisory Council on FASD

WHAT IS FASD?

An umbrella term used to describe the range of effects or disorders that can occur in an individual whose mother drank alcohol during pregnancy. It can include vision and hearing problems, respiratory problems, heart problems, low birth weight, and learning disabilities.



HOW TO AVOID FASD?

Short answer - don't drink. If you have already consumed alcohol during pregnancy, stop! If you are at risk or trying to become pregnant - don't drink! There is only one cause of FASD - drinking alcohol. This includes beer and wine. The only way to prevent FASD is to completely abstain from alcohol during pregnancy.

Rates of frequent drinking and binge drinking remain at high levels among pregnant women. It's estimated that at least 55% of women are drinking at the time they become pregnant and some of them continue to drink heavily throughout their pregnancy.



Women appear to be drinking alcohol more than in the past and drinking in a similar amount and pattern to men. Alcohol and tobacco continue to be used by pregnant women despite health warnings.

WHY IS ALCOHOL A PROBLEM?

ALCOHOL ABSORPTION

Alcohol by its very nature is an agent that can cause malformations of an embryo or fetus. Alcohol can cross the placenta and enter the circulation system of the unborn baby, damaging cells and the DNA they contain. This damage that prenatal alcohol exposure causes to the baby is permanent and seems to affect the developing brain more than any other organ.



The Surgeon General says don't drink if - you are pregnant now, if you find out you're pregnant, or if you're having sex without using birth control.



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AT 601.359.1288 OR VISIT WWW.DMH.MS.GOV.