



PRoF

Alliance

Preventing Alcohol Exposed
Pregnancies



PROF Alliance

Our mission is to prevent fetal alcohol spectrum disorders and to support all impacted throughout Minnesota and beyond.

Our vision is a world in which alcohol is not consumed during pregnancy and people living with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders are identified, supported, & valued.

Proof Alliance acknowledges that not every person who can become pregnant identifies as a woman. We try to use gender-neutral language as often as possible, much of the current research refers only to “women” when discussing the ability to become pregnant. When citing this research, we refer to the language used in the study. In these cases, “woman” refers to someone who was assigned female at birth.





Objectives

After this presentation, you'll have a better understanding of:

- What FASD is and how you can prevent it
- How to spot risky alcohol use
- The benefits of empowering pregnancies through resources, information, and awareness.

What is FASD?

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

- Brain-based
 - Medical disorder
 - 100% preventable
 - Caused by prenatal alcohol exposure (drinking during pregnancy)
 - Effects are lifelong and irreversible
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1973

The effects of prenatal alcohol exposure were first recognized in research journals in the early 70s. The effects were referred to as 'fetal alcohol syndrome'



1996

In 1996, the Institute of Medicine split this medical condition into five different diagnoses.



2000+

The effects of prenatal alcohol exposure are now referred to as a whole spectrum. FASD includes all five diagnoses first identified in 1996.

Developmental Skills: Case Example



Characteristics of FASD

It's important to remember that FASD is a spectrum disorder. This is only a small sampling of the characteristics that are common with FASD.

- Low birthweight, slow to develop
- Irritability or anger
- Sensitivity to light, noise and touch
- Trouble sleeping
- Hyperactivity





Other common characteristics of FASD

- Speech and language delays
- Poor social skills
- Easily distracted, short attention span
- Poor coordination
- Poor impulse control
- Poor memory
- Difficulty in school

Alcohol causes more
birth defects than
smoking tobacco and
using illegal drugs.

Other birth defects caused by prenatal alcohol exposure

In addition to FASD, drinking while pregnant can cause:

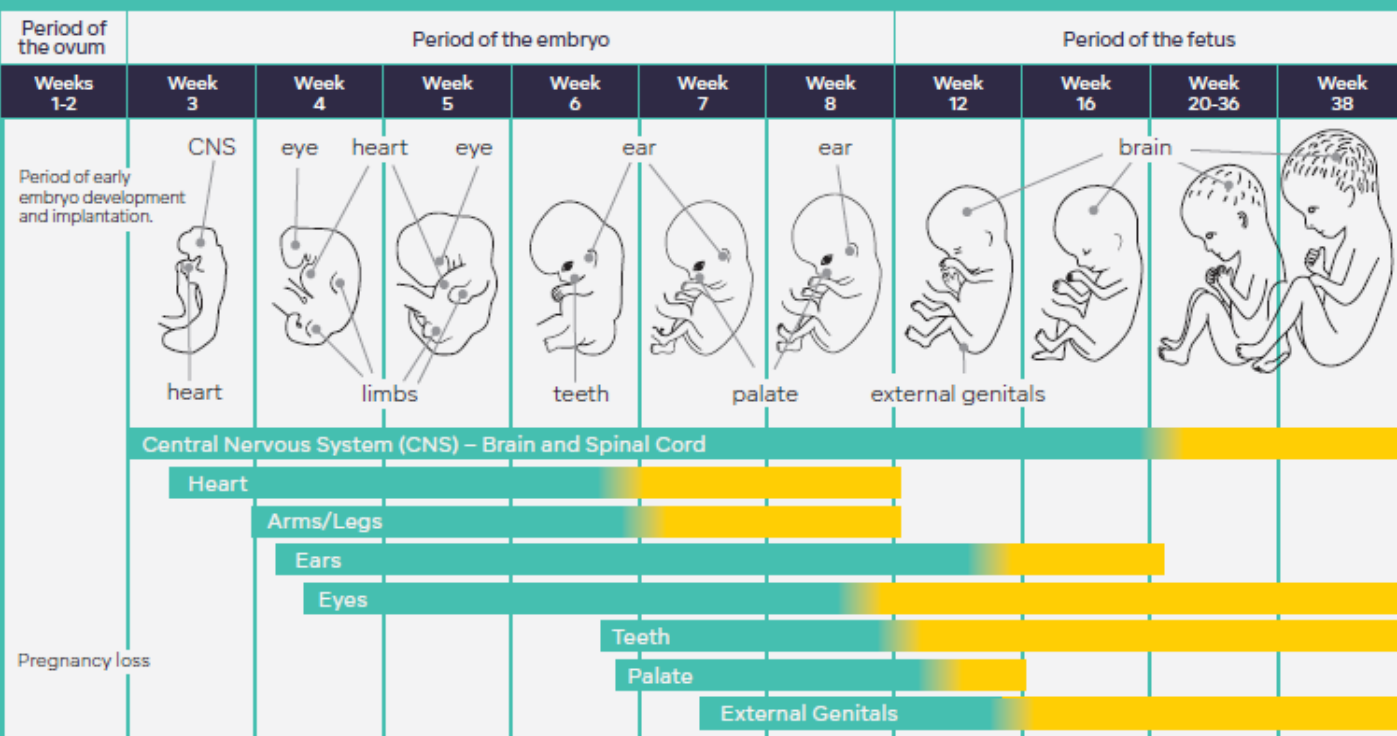
- Structural brain injury
- Microcephaly
- Heart defects
- Hearing and vision problems
- Abnormal development in the bones, kidneys and other organs
- Abnormal facial development in the lips, mid-face and eyes

Facial features

It's a common myth that all people with an FASD have a specific set of facial features.

- The fact is only 10-15% of people with FASD have these facial features.





- Most common site of birth defects
- Period of development when major defects in bodily structure can occur.
- Period of development when major functional defects and minor structural defects can occur.

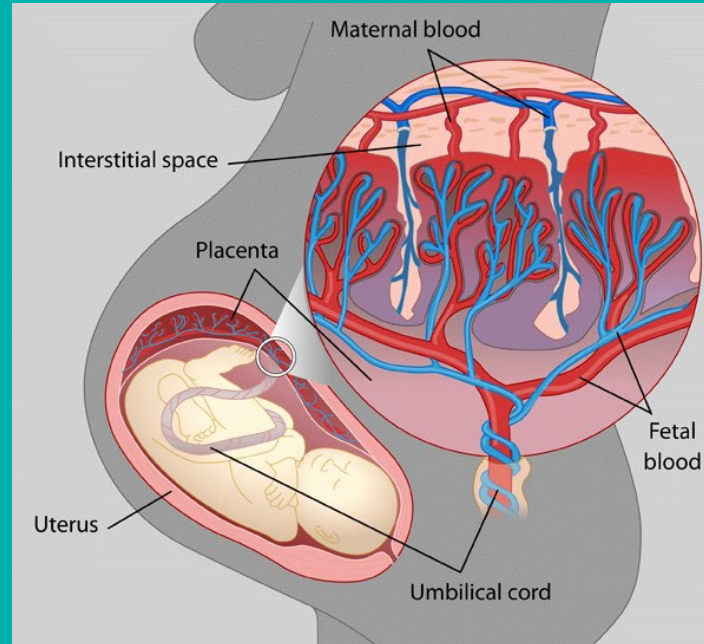
Adapted from Moore, 1993, the National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (NOFAS), 2009, and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), 2018.¹

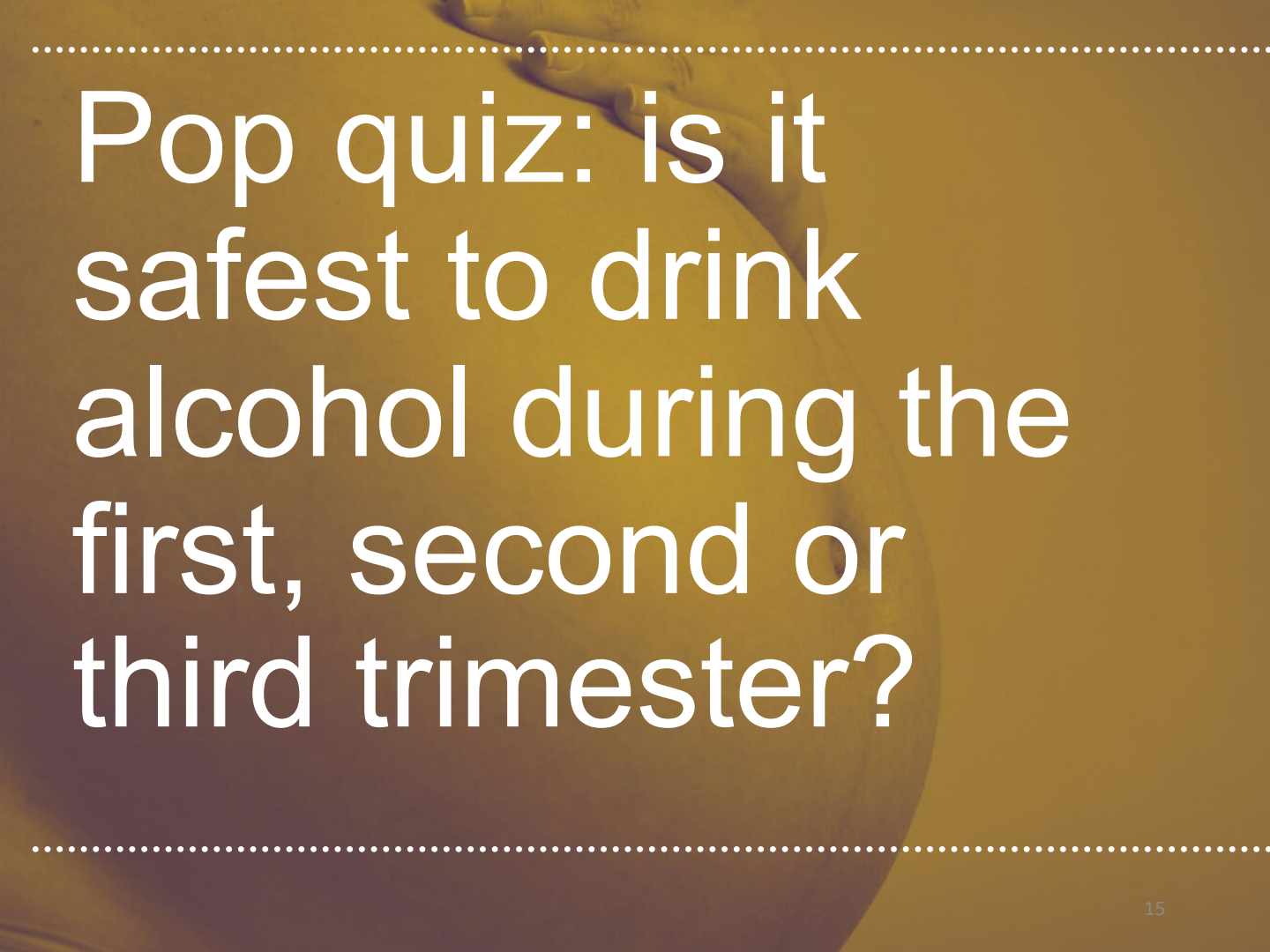
¹This fetal chart shows the 38 weeks of pregnancy. Since it is difficult to know exactly when conception occurs, health care providers calculate a woman's due date 40 weeks from the start of their last menstrual cycle.

How alcohol affects a fetus

After a pregnant person drinks alcohol:

- Alcohol enters the placenta and goes into the blood supply of the fetus
- Alcohol gets into the amniotic fluid when the fetus urinates
- The fetus then swallows the amniotic fluid
- This process repeats itself again and again until the alcohol is eventually processed. This means the fetus is exposed over and over to the alcohol.



A hand holding a glass of wine against a warm, golden background. The text is overlaid on the image.

Pop quiz: is it
safest to drink
alcohol during the
first, second or
third trimester?

Effects of alcohol during pregnancy

Decades of research have shown:

- Even low levels of alcohol can affect the fetus
- The risk increases with more alcohol
- **The healthiest and safest choice is to avoid drinking any alcohol during pregnancy.**



Every pregnancy is different.

How alcohol affects the fetus depends on a number of things:

- Genetics
- Pregnant person's diet
- Pregnant person's age
- Pregnant person's substance use
- Amount of alcohol a pregnant person has consumed
- ~~Type of alcohol a pregnant person has consumed~~

Social determinants of health & their influence

Social Determinants of Health



Social Determinants of Health
Copyright-free


 Healthy People 2030

Can be protective OR harmful

- Economic stability
- Education access and quality
- Health care access and quality
- Neighborhood and built environment
- Social and community context
 - Racism
 - Poverty
 - Historical trauma
 - Normalization of alcohol use
 - Alcohol policies

1 in 20

Experts estimate that as many as 1 in 20 children in the U.S. have an FASD.



Why would someone
drink during pregnancy?

Ending the stigma

Prenatal alcohol exposure is a complex public health issue.

- They drank before they knew they were pregnant
- They didn't know the risks associated with prenatal alcohol exposure
- A healthcare provider gave them wrong information about the risks associated with prenatal alcohol exposure
- They know someone who drank during pregnancy and their child has not been diagnosed with an FASD
- They may have an alcohol use disorder
- They are part of a culture in which drinking alcohol is socially acceptable
- They felt pressure from family and friends



is it safe to drink while pregnant



Google Search

I'm Feeling Lucky

Where are you getting your medical advice from?

Abstaining completely from alcohol during pregnancy - from conception through birth - is recommended by all major medical groups, including:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- U.S. Surgeon General
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG)
- National Institutes of Health
- World Health Organization

True or false:
only people with
alcohol use
disorders are at risk
of having a child
with an FASD.



14%

In the United States,

14% of women drank alcohol during pregnancy and 5% engaged in binge drinking.

Source: Denny CH, Acero CS, Naimi TS, Kim SY. Consumption of Alcohol Beverages and Binge Drinking Among Pregnant Women Aged 18–44 Years — United States, 2015–2017. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2019;68:365–368.



Nursing and FASD

Can drinking while nursing cause an FASD?

- Alcohol in breast milk cannot cause an FASD
- Alcohol in breast milk can impact a baby's sleep patterns, growth and development
- The safest choice is to continue not drinking alcohol if breastfeeding
- For more info, talk with your healthcare provider. You can also visit aap.org or mothertobaby.org





What role does dad play?

- There is not enough research yet to decide if the father's alcohol use can also be unsafe.
- Even so, drinking less or completely giving up alcohol can be a healthy choice for men.
- Pregnant people who have a supportive partner are more likely to give up unsafe behaviors like drinking.

Alcohol Culture in the United States

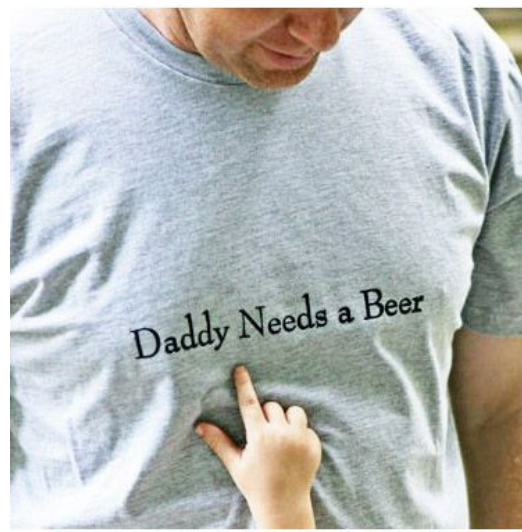




I wish my tolerance for
my children would
increase as much
as my tolerance
for wine.



someecards





How do your drinking habits *before* pregnancy relate to FASD?

What's one drink?

Many people are surprised to learn what a standard serving actually looks like.

- Generally, the standard is 12 ounces for beer, 5 oz for wine and 1.5 oz for distilled spirits
- Alcohol content varies from one beverage to the next





Binge drinking

Women*: 4 or more drinks in 2 hours

Men*: 5 or more drinks in 2 hours

*Disclaimer: The current research around alcohol use is based on cisgender people. In these examples, "women" refers to those assigned female at birth, and "men" refers to those assigned male at birth.



17%

of adults binge drink, and it's most common among adults 18-34 years (also the age range of people most likely to become pregnant).

If you're pregnant,
any drinking is
considered risky.



Unplanned Pregnancy

- 45% of pregnancies in the United States are unplanned.
- Unplanned pregnancy rates are highest among women ages 20-24.



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**Planned
pregnancies can
help prevent FASD.**

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Remember these three things:

You are now empowered with the information to help prevent a child from having a life-long and irreversible disability. That's huge! Remember,

- Safer alcohol choices and planned pregnancies both help prevent FASD.
- FASD is a brain-based, permanent disability with wide-ranging effects that impacts 1 in 20 children in the U.S.
- During pregnancy, there is no known safe amount of alcohol, no safe type of alcohol, and no safe time to drink alcohol.

**We all play a role in
preventing FASD and
supporting those
impacted!**

Proof Alliance Resources

- Public awareness & prevention
- Community grants & partners
- Family engagement & support
- Diagnostic clinic & screening
- Youth & young adult program
- Public policy work
- Professional education
- Proof Alliance website resources



Training Evaluation

Scan the QR code to take a quick 5 question survey about this training.

We appreciate your feedback!





PR%oF

Alliance

Website:

www.ProofAlliance.org

Email:

info@ProofAlliance.org

Phone: 651.917.2370

Address: 1876 Minnehaha Ave
W

St. Paul, MN 55104

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