

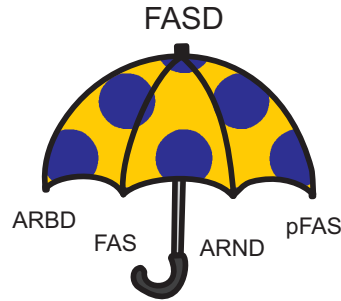
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders

(FASDs)



What is FASD?

FASD is the most common cause of preventable developmental disabilities in Canada.



FASD is an umbrella term used to describe the wide range of physical and behavioral difficulties experienced by individuals after exposure to alcohol *in utero* that can be lifelong.

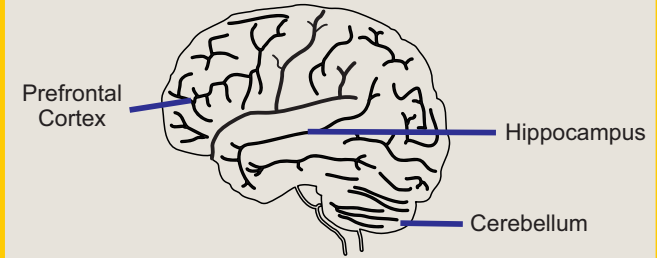
Generally, FASDs are caused by alcohol consumption during pregnancy. Alcohol in the mother's blood passes through the placenta and umbilical cord to reach the baby and can linger in the amniotic fluid.

ARBD: Alcohol-related brain disorders
FAS: Fetal alcohol syndrome
ARND: Alcohol-related neurodevelopmental disorders
pFAS: Partial fetal alcohol syndrome

Facts & Figures

- It is estimated that **1%** of the Canadian population have FASD
- **9 in every 1000** babies born in Canada have FASD
- The annual cost of FASD in Canada is estimated at **\$7.6 billion**

Key brain areas affected by FASD



Brain Area	Function
Hippocampus	learning & memory
Prefrontal Cortex	planning & decision making
Cerebellum	movement & motor control

How can we prevent FASD?

Education

The first step to prevention is increasing awareness of the damage caused by alcohol use during pregnancy. By learning the science behind FASD, we can eliminate public misconceptions about alcohol and pregnancy and ensure that all women who are pregnant or planning to become pregnant know that there is no known safe amount or timing of alcohol consumption during pregnancy.

Support

It is important to provide support for pregnant women or women planning to become pregnant who may require addiction treatment services. Health care and social service providers are great resources, and can speak openly about alcohol use. Friends and family members also play a big role in preventing alcohol use during pregnancy.



Want to learn more?

Canada FASD Research Network
www.canfasd.ca

Provincial Outreach Program for FASD
www.fasdoutreach.ca

BC Association of Pregnancy Outreach Programs
www.bcapop.ca

Healthy Families BC
www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
www.camh.net

Ministry of Children and Family Development
www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/fasd/index

Christie Laboratory
www.christielaboratory.com



University of Victoria

FASD research at the University of Victoria

At the University of Victoria the laboratory of Dr. Brian Christie has been working to understand how alcohol use during pregnancy affects different areas of the brain and how these changes in the brain affect behavior. We are especially interested in how exercise and dietary supplementation may help alleviate some of the cognitive problems caused by alcohol exposure *in utero*.

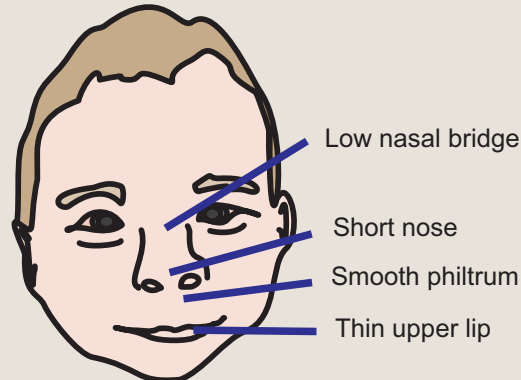
Is there a safe limit?

No. The current recommendation made by the Canadian Surgeon General is that **pregnant women and women who are considering becoming pregnant should abstain from alcohol consumption to eliminate alcohol-exposed pregnancies and FASDs.** There is no known safe limit or time to consume alcohol during pregnancy.



Pregnancy and alcohol don't mix
Why take the risk?

Facial characteristics associated with FASD



Common challenges experienced by individuals with FASD

- **Executive functioning**
difficulties with memory, problem solving, planning, impulsivity
- **Communication**
impaired written and verbal comprehension
- **Motor defects**
impaired balance and coordination
- **Sensory impairments**
pain, light, smell, heat