

Talking about Alcohol & Pregnancy: Information for Healthcare Providers in Newfoundland & Labrador

FASD is the leading cause of acquired developmental disability in Canada. FASD impacts individuals in various and complex ways across the lifespan.

Prevalence estimates suggest 4% of the general Canadian population is impacted by FASD. Estimates are higher for special populations (e.g., children in care & individuals in the justice system).

In Newfoundland & Labrador, more than 20,000 individuals are believed to be impacted by FASD.

Healthcare providers play an important role in supporting FASD prevention. **fasdNL** recommends open and supportive approaches to these conversations with women and their partners.

FASD occurs in all societies that consume alcohol and across all socioeconomic levels. Blame, shame, and stigma associated with FASD can result in conversations about alcohol and pregnancy being missed.

Women may consume alcohol during pregnancy if their pregnancy is not yet known, as a coping mechanism, or because of misinformation that alcohol is not harmful to the fetus.

“Any alcohol is harmful for the baby.”



“I think you should....”



“You’re not drinking alcohol during your pregnancy, are you?”



Be mindful and avoid wording that can be scary, confrontational, or increases power dynamics between health care provider and patient.



Suggested Questions & Conversation Starters



“I ask all my patients questions about alcohol (substance use) because it’s important for our overall health. Would it be alright for me to do this now?”



“I appreciate that you’re open to talking with me about alcohol use.”



“Many women have questions about drinking alcohol during pregnancy. Can I answer any questions you may have?”



“Can you tell me a bit about your alcohol use before and during pregnancy?”

If you receive positive responses from women, have concerns, or would like additional information, we recommend the following resources.

Centre of Excellence for Women’s Health <http://bccewh.bc.ca> > Reports & Resources > Publications: Maternal Health & Substance Use

CanFASD – Canada FASD Research Network
www.canfasd.ca/topics/prevention

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