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FASD

IT’S NOT WHAT YOU THINK

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What About the Father?

Does a father's drinking cause FASD?

A father's drinking does **not directly** cause FASD. Alcohol can damage sperm and cause **other neurological changes** such as impulsivity, learning disabilities, attention difficulties and lower birth weight.

FASD can only be caused by **prenatal alcohol exposure,** meaning drinking while the fetus is developing in utero. This is why FASD is sometimes viewed as a women's only issue. HOWEVER, fathers are equally involved in creating a pregnancy.

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What About the Father?

Does a father's drinking cause FASD?

When a father drinks, they can influence the mothers drinking behaviours. A partner drinking can cause stress to the pregnant person, who may turn to alcohol as a coping mechanism, especially if that was what they had done before becoming pregnant.

Drinking contexts and social factors influence the drinking behaviours of both men and women, meaning a father drinking can influence a mother to do so, and vice versa. This is why having access to supports during pregnancy is so important, as is preventing FASD.

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What can Fathers & Partners Do?

- Refrain from drinking alcohol during a partner's pregnancy; get help for your drinking, if needed. It is much more difficult for someone to abstain from alcohol during pregnancy if their partner is drinking, than if their partner abstains.
- Make non-alcoholic beverage options commonplace when hosting or going out.
- Be compassionate towards those who may be struggling with alcohol use during pregnancy; restrict judgement and be respectful.
- Plan ahead and use protection to prevent unplanned pregnancies. 100% of unplanned pregnancies involve a man.
- Get involved in FASD work and learn how alcohol affects pregnancy, and how to be an effective support to you pregnant partner.

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