

## WHAT IS FASD?

FASD stands for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. It is a lifelong disability that affects the brain and body of people who were exposed to alcohol in the womb. Each person with FASD has both strengths and challenges and will need special supports to help them succeed with many different parts of their daily lives.

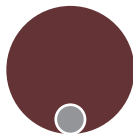
## THE LEADING DISABILITY

FASD is the leading developmental disability in Canada. It affects 4% of Canadians. That's more people than:



Autism

1.52%



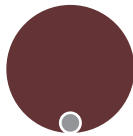
Cerebral Palsy

0.21%



Down Syndrome

0.14%



Tourette's Syndrome

0.10%



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# FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER (FASD)



1,500,000 CANADIANS

have FASD



LEARN MORE

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This resource was created by the Canada FASD Research Network, modelled after a similar document from NOFASD Australia.

Canada's Leading Developmental Disability

## THE DISABILITY

FASD is a spectrum disorder. Each person with FASD has their own unique strengths and challenges. Their challenges may change throughout their life, but they will need lifelong supports to succeed.



FASD is a  
**WHOLE BODY  
DISORDER**

It affects both the brain  
and the body.



## LANGUAGE MATTERS

The language we use to talk about FASD is very important. Language shapes how we see a topic. It can contribute to negative stereotypes and stigma.

By changing the way we talk about FASD, we can reduce misinformation and stigma.

When we talk about FASD we want to make sure we use:

### strengths-based language

#### USE

person with FASD or affected by FASD

#### AVOID

damaged by FASD or suffering from FASD

### language that promotes dignity

#### USE

cognitive disability or neurodevelopmental disability

#### AVOID

mentally disabled

### consistent messages

#### USE

FASD can be preventable

#### AVOID

FASD is 100% preventable

### evidence-based information

#### USE

the safest option is no alcohol during pregnancy

#### AVOID

any alcohol will harm your baby

### person-first language

#### USE

children with FASD  
women who use alcohol

#### AVOID

FASD kids  
alcoholic or addict

### harm reduction approaches

#### USE

stopping alcohol use at any time will reduce your risk

#### AVOID

just one drink can cause FASD

## PREVENTING FASD

There is no known safe amount of alcohol to drink during pregnancy. Experts recommend that the safest option is no alcohol at all.

## ZERO ALCOHOL IS SAFEST

But there are a number of reasons someone may drink during pregnancy, including:

- Not knowing the risks of drinking during pregnancy
- Not knowing they are pregnant
- Using alcohol to cope with trauma or violence
- Pressure from a partner
- Substance use challenges

**Go alcohol-free if you are pregnant, planning a pregnancy, or having unprotected sex.**

## FASD FACTS

The prevalence of FASD is higher in certain populations.

Up to

**11%**

of children in the child welfare system have FASD

You often can't tell if someone has FASD just by looking at them.

Less than

**10%**

of people with prenatal alcohol exposure have visible facial differences

People with FASD may experience many challenges

Approximately

**90%**

of people with FASD will experience mental health challenges at some point

## PREVENTION FACTS

Use effective contraception if you don't want to be pregnant.

Up to

**60%**

of pregnancies are unplanned and many people do not know they are pregnant until several weeks along

Go alcohol-free if there's a chance you could be pregnant.

Up to

**62%**

of women drank alcohol within three months of their pregnancy

Get the facts about drinking alcohol during pregnancy.

Less than

**50%**

of doctors talk to their patients about the risks of alcohol in pregnancy