

# GET *the* FACTS

## Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

**MYTH**

**FACT**

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| FASD only affects certain populations. <b>FALSE</b>  | FASD is solely and directly the result of prenatal exposure to alcohol. It affects people of all races, ages, cultures, classes, genders and sexualities.   |
| FASD is just the latest trendy disability. <b>FALSE</b>  | There have always been people with FASD, but only recently has the enormous prevalence of this disability become recognised.  |
| Behaviour is a choice. People with FASD just need to learn and try harder. <b>FALSE</b>                                    | Behaviours associated with FASD are symptoms of a brain-based disability. People who live with FASD need our understanding and support to be successful. With FASD it is not about trying harder... it is about trying differently. It is not about choice.                                 |
| All individuals with FASD have distinctive facial features. <b>FALSE</b>   | Most individuals with FASD will not have distinctive facial features (less than 10%). FASD is often referred to as the 'invisible' disability as you cannot tell just by looking at the face. This often leads to individuals being misdiagnosed.   |
| Certain types of alcohol are safe to drink during pregnancy. Drinking in moderation during pregnancy is safe. <b>FALSE</b> | It does not matter whether it is champagne, wine, beer, vodka, rum, gin, etc. All contain alcohol. The brain develops throughout the whole pregnancy and drinking alcohol at any time can damage different parts of the brain, therefore there is no "safe time" to drink during pregnancy. |
| FASD occurs only when mothers are alcoholics or binge drinkers. <b>FALSE</b>   | There is no known safe amount of alcohol that can be consumed during pregnancy. Alcohol use in pregnancy is highest in women aged 35-44 (18.6%), college graduates (13%), and single women (12.9%)  |
| All individuals with FASD have an intellectual disability. <b>FALSE</b>  | An intellectual disability is an Intelligence Quotient (IQ) score of less than 70. Individuals with FASD have an average IQ of 90 (which is the same as the general population)   |
| People with FASD socially mature at a rate appropriate to their chronological age. <b>FALSE</b>                            | Individuals with FASD are often dysmature (can seem younger than their chronological age) in relation to their peers.   |
| Heavy drinking by Canadian Women is decreasing. <b>FALSE</b>   | Heavy drinking by women is on the rise (Statistics Canada, 2015)  |
| A father's alcohol consumption prior to conception can cause FASD. <b>FALSE</b>  | It does not cause FASD as we presently understand it. Expectant fathers can play a key role in prevention by supporting their partners in the decision not to drink alcohol during pregnancy.   |