When a woman drinks alcohol, the alcohol enters her blood and reaches the unborn baby (fetus) through the umbilical cord. Alcohol is toxic to a fetus. The fetus has a difficult time processing alcohol. The fetus’s blood alcohol content will be much higher and last longer than the mother’s. The more the mother drinks, the more harm is done. When a pregnant woman drinks alcohol, her baby does too.

**ALCOHOL AFFECTS UNBORN BABIES**

**EFFECTS OF FASD**

FASD is a series of birth defects that last a lifetime.

- Smaller growth of fetus and/or smaller size at birth
- Smaller size in childhood and adulthood
- Small head, small eyes, cleft palate, short nose, flattened forehead
- Mental retardation, learning, and developmental problems
- Speech and hearing problems
- Heart, liver, kidney and dental defects
- Skeletal defects such as fused bones
- 30-45% of women who are heavy drinkers have children with severe FASD
- Heavy drinkers are 3 times more likely to miscarry than non-drinkers.
- Risk of miscarriage is double for women who have 2-4 drinks a week.
- Two drinks a week is associated with low birth weight.
- FASD costs the US an estimated 6 billion each year and cost individuals at least 2 million over a lifetime.

FASD is 100% preventable! The only cause of FASD is prenatal exposure to alcohol. Each year around 50,000 babies are born with alcohol-related damage.

**FASD FACTS**

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**FASD MYTHS**

- **MYTH:** "MY SISTER DRANK WHILE PREGNANT AND HER BABY WAS FINE."
  - **TRUTH:** Some fetuses are more easily hurt by alcohol than others. No one knows which will be most affected. The best choice is to stay away from alcohol when pregnant.

- **MYTH:** "ONLY ALCOHOLIC MOTHERS HAVE BABIES WITH FASD."
  - **TRUTH:** Even light to medium amounts of drinking can increase the risk of defects or miscarriage.

- **MYTH:** "I DON’T FEEL PREGNANT. I DON’T LOOK PREGNANT. THE BABY IS TOO SMALL TO BE AFFECTED BY ALCOHOL."
  - **TRUTH:** Some of the most serious damage to the fetus can happen within the first eight weeks of pregnancy — when you may not even know you’re pregnant. If you think you’re pregnant or are trying to get pregnant, stay away from alcohol.

**IF YOU’RE PREGNANT OR WANT TO BE...**

- **PREGNANT? PUT YOUR BABY FIRST: DON’T DRINK!**
- If pregnant, do not drink alcohol.
- Pregnant women who have already consumed alcohol should stop at once.
- If you are considering becoming pregnant, don’t drink alcohol.
- There is no safe amount of alcohol to drink while pregnant.