

FOETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDERS

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What is FASD?

FASD, Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders is an umbrella term for several diagnoses that are all related to prenatal exposure to alcohol (i.e. while a baby is still in the womb)

These are:

- Foetal Alcohol Syndrome, FAS
- Partial Foetal Alcohol Syndrome, PFAS
- Alcohol Related Neuro-developmental Disorder, ARND
- Alcohol Related Birth Defects, ARBD
- Foetal Alcohol Effects, FAE

FASD is a series of preventable birth defects caused entirely by a woman drinking alcohol at any time during her pregnancy, often even before she knows that she is pregnant. Beer, wine, spirits - it's all the same to the developing baby.

The term "Spectrum" is used because each individual with FASD may have some or all of a spectrum of mental and physical challenges. In addition each individual with FASD may have these challenges to a degree or "spectrum" from mild to very severe.

These defects of both the brain and the body exist only because of prenatal exposure to alcohol. Often the condition goes undiagnosed, or is misdiagnosed, for example as autism or ADHD, and this can lead to secondary disabilities.

The challenges a person with FASD faces may include:

The Brain	The Body	Secondary Disabilities
Intellectual Disability; lowered IQ Memory Disorders Learning Disorders Attention Disorders Sensory Disorders Speech and Language Disorders Mood Disorders Behavioural Disorders Autistic Like Behaviours Sleep Disorders	Visual and Eye Defects Hearing and Ear Defects Mouth, Teeth and Facial Defects Weak Immune System Epilepsy Liver Damage Kidney Defects Heart Defects Cerebral Palsy, Muscular Defects Height and Weight Deficiencies Hormonal Disorders Skeletal Defects Genital Defects	Loneliness School Expulsions Addictions Chronic Unemployment Promiscuity Unplanned Pregnancies Poverty Criminality Prison Homelessness Depression and Suicide