

# Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Awareness Toolkit

Scottish Government Child and Maternal Health Division



September 2013

In Partnership with:



# Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Awareness Toolkit

**Scottish Government Child and Maternal Health Division**



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## Points to remember:

**FASD is common, expensive and preventable**

*Prof Chris Loock, Vancouver*

**Consistent key messages increase awareness**

**Everyone can make a difference in preventing FASD**

**Women with alcohol problems need support, understanding and help to change their alcohol use**

## Contents

Policy context	3
Aims & logic model	4
FASD factsheet	5
FAQs	6
Activities for FASD Awareness Day	8
Mocktail challenges	9
FASD quiz	10
Using social media	11
Sample media articles	12
Quiz answers	13
Planning grid	14
Media releases	15
Useful information	17

## 9th September is International FASD Awareness Day

**On 9th September each year, communities around the world take time to think about spending the nine months of pregnancy free from alcohol. Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) is the leading known preventable cause of learning disability worldwide. Avoiding alcohol during pregnancy and when contemplating pregnancy is the only way to be sure that the baby will not be affected by FASD.**

Affected children can have a wide range of physical, growth and neurobehavioural problems which impact on their everyday lives and limit their independence.

This toolkit promotes the following key messages:

- FASD is preventable.
- If you want to be sure that your baby is protected from FASD, avoid alcohol for the duration of your pregnancy.
- There is no known safe amount of alcohol to drink while pregnant. The Chief Medical Officer for Scotland, Sir Harry Burns, gives the clear message that 'during pregnancy or when trying to conceive, no alcohol means no risk of FASD'.
- Everyone has a role to play in supporting pregnant women to avoid alcohol.

### What's Inside

**Inside this toolkit, you will find information and tools to help you raise awareness of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)**

The term FASD refers to the range of permanent and irreversible birth defects caused by maternal alcohol consumption during pregnancy.

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) is the most readily recognisable presentation of FASD.

FASD is expensive to diagnose and manage. Affected individuals are unlikely to attain their full potential and will require additional services to help them with everyday life.

## Toolkit contents

**Materials in this toolkit include fact sheets about how alcohol can damage the fetus, recipes for non-alcoholic cocktails, and some ideas that you might use to organise and support local awareness events or staff training.**

There is a quiz to test knowledge about alcohol and pregnancy, together with sample articles and press releases. You can use these materials in a variety of ways, for example, put them on your intranet pages, texts to your colleagues and friends, include them in your staff newsletters, organise a coffee

morning or discussion group and bring them into education initiatives. Taking part in these types of activities will demonstrate your support in preventing FASD and supporting women to avoid alcohol during pregnancy.

The materials will also help us to be consistent in how we communicate with stakeholders and the media about FASD Awareness Day.

Nothing in this toolkit is compulsory, it provides useful tips to help you get started.



## Policy context

In the Scottish Government's strategic approach to tackling alcohol misuse<sup>1</sup>, *Changing Scotland's Relationship with Alcohol* (2009), Point 69 focuses on children affected by parental alcohol use and a commitment to "support children and families affected by any kind of parental substance misuse, whether drugs or alcohol".

Children Affected by Parental Substance Misuse (CAPSM) is now integrated within the Scottish Government's wider change programme, *Getting it Right for Every Child*<sup>2</sup> and the work of the Early Years Collaborative in achieving the

**"...as much as 40% of all spending on public services is accounted for by interventions that could have been avoided by prioritising a preventative approach."** (Christie Commission 2011)

aims of maximising children's development. Together these provide a framework for joint working to deliver better outcomes for children. Early intervention is identified as a priority and in particular a focus on pregnancy and preconception as the most effective time to intervene. The Christie Commission<sup>3</sup> report on the future of public services emphasises a shift from treatment to prevention.

<sup>1</sup> *Changing Scotland's Relationship with Alcohol: A Framework for Action*. Scottish Government 2009

<sup>2</sup> *Getting it Right for Every Child*. Evaluation Themed Briefings. Scottish Government 2010

<sup>3</sup> *Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services*. 2011

## Aims and key messages

### Aims:

- To increase public awareness and understanding for the message: **“During pregnancy: no alcohol - no risk”**.
- To reduce public confusion about drinking alcohol during pregnancy.
- To strengthen the prevention role of family and friends.

### Key messages:

- FASD is preventable.
- If you want to be sure that your baby is protected from FASD, avoid alcohol for the duration of your pregnancy.
- There is no known safe amount or type of alcohol to drink while pregnant.
- Everyone has a role to play in supporting pregnant women to avoid alcohol.

## Logic model – outcomes

### Long-term outcome

- Improved life chances for all children.

### Medium-term outcome

- Zero alcohol consumption during pregnancy is the norm in Scotland.

### Short-term outcomes

- Public confusion reduced & role of family and friend support strengthened.
- Enthusiasm for and participation in International FASD Awareness Day.
- Raise the profile of FASD in Scotland and its contribution to the Early Years Collaborative aims, CAPSM, Scotland’s Alcohol Framework, and the prioritisation of prevention in public services.

### Outputs

- Positive media coverage.
- Established networks for future support.
- Range of activities.
- Clear, simple and effective messages promoted at a population level.

## Logic model – reach & activities

### Reach

- Alcohol and Drug Partnerships partner organisations
- Maternity services
- Children and family services
- Fostering & adoption
- Parent support initiatives
- Healthcare workers
- Workplaces
- General public
- Volunteer centres
- Early Years Collaborative
- Community Planning Partnerships

### Activities

- Early Years Briefing developed for dissemination
- Press release
- E-mail banners
- Press & public awareness launch, key people for quotes/interviews
- Ideas for action flyer
- People and briefing for ‘pregnant pause’ activity
- Identify community assets & locations
- Staff & facilities for public engagement
- Display equipment: table & cover, display board, balloons & tie ribbons, staff
- Leaflets – Alcohol Focus Scotland Alcohol and Pregnancy, mocktails for mum, NOFAS web links
- Engagement competition – e.g. mocktails for mums
- Recording the events with camera or smart phone
- Survey monkey evaluation



## FASD – factsheet

### **What is fetal alcohol spectrum disorder?**

Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) is the name given to a group of permanent conditions that a person can have when (s)he was exposed to alcohol prenatally. These conditions include physical and intellectual disabilities, as well as problems with behaviour and learning. Often, a person has a mix of these problems. FASD is the leading known preventable cause of intellectual disability and birth defects.

### **What causes FASD and how can it be prevented?**

FASD is caused by maternal use of alcohol during pregnancy. There is no known amount of alcohol that is safe to drink while pregnant. All drinks that contain alcohol can harm an unborn baby. There is no safe time to drink during pregnancy. Alcohol can harm a baby at any time during pregnancy.

So, to prevent FASD, women should not drink alcohol while pregnant, or even when they might get pregnant. FASD is preventable. If women do not drink alcohol during pregnancy, their children will not have FASD.

### **What are some signs of FASD?**

Signs of FASD can be physical or intellectual. That means they can affect the mind or the body, or both. Because FASD is made up of a group of disorders, people with FASD can show a wide range and mix of signs.

Physical signs of FASD can include abnormal facial features such as narrow eye openings and a smooth philtrum (the ridge between the upper lip and nose), small head size, short stature, and low body weight.

Problems with the body's organs, vision and hearing, heart, kidneys or bone structure are common. Intellectual and behavioural signs of FASD might include problems with memory, judgment or impulse control, motor skills, learning (especially in numeracy), paying attention, and low IQ. Specific learning disabilities are also possible.

### **Treatment**

FASD lasts a lifetime. There is no cure for FASD, but research shows that early intervention and appropriate treatment can improve a child's development.

There are many types of treatment options, including medication to help with some symptoms, behaviour and education therapy, parent training, and other cognitive and behavioural approaches. No one treatment is right for every child. Good treatment plans will include close monitoring, follow-ups, and changes as needed along the way.

In addition, "protective factors" can help reduce the effects of FASD and help people with these conditions reach their full potential.

Protective factors include:

- Diagnosis before 6 years of age
- Loving, nurturing and stable home environment during the school years
- Absence of violence in the home
- Involvement of additional support for learning and social services.

## Frequently asked questions

### **Q. What and when is Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Awareness Day?**

A. FASD Awareness Day is 9th September each year. This date was chosen to symbolise the 9 months of pregnancy.

### **Q. What is FASD?**

A. Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) is the term given to a range of permanent and irreversible birth defects caused by maternal drinking during pregnancy. Affected children tend to grow less well, may have physical disabilities and display a variety of learning difficulties and behavioural problems due to damage to the brain and nervous system. These problems are permanent and irreversible, they cannot be 'cured' nor do they fade with time. FASD is not well recognised in the UK but is thought to affect up to one in a hundred babies born around the world.

### **Q. What is the purpose of the activity?**

A. The top priority is the prevention of FASD. To do this we need to be able to reach prospective mothers and their partners as soon as possible with accurate information about drinking alcohol, pregnancy and FASD.

### **Q. What is the desired outcome?**

A. That as many people as possible understand and spread the word that alcohol and pregnancy do not mix.

### **Q. What are we raising awareness of?**

A. We can all help prevent FASD. The more people learn about FASD, the more people can help bring about change.

### **Q. What evidence is there that having the occasional drink during pregnancy does any harm at all?**

A. It is true that not all women who drink alcohol during their pregnancy give birth to babies who have been harmed by it. There are too many other factors to predict with certainty what alcohol use, in which pregnancies, will result in harm to the baby. If you want to be sure – the recommendation is to avoid alcohol completely.

### **Q. Won't this cause unnecessary alarm?**

A. Research has not established a 'safe' level of alcohol intake while pregnant. What is known is that taking a 'pause' in alcohol use from conception to delivery will guarantee no alcohol related harm.

### **Q. How many people are affected by FASD in Scotland?**

A. Current estimates<sup>1</sup> suggest that there are over 10,000 people (birth to 18 years) affected by FASD in Scotland.

### **Q. What women are you trying to reach?**

A. We are trying to reach everyone, including young women who may be more inclined to binge drink, and older mums-to-be who may drink more regularly, not realising that they are pregnant at the time. That is why medical advice is to avoid alcohol if you are pregnant or trying to conceive. You do not have to be a woman, or a health professional, to play a constructive and important role in raising awareness and preventing alcohol related birth defects.

<sup>1</sup> Children in Scotland (2001). Early years briefing. <http://www.childreninScotland.org.uk>

## Frequently asked questions (contd)

**Q. Isn't it true that the critical time is during the first 3 months of pregnancy?**

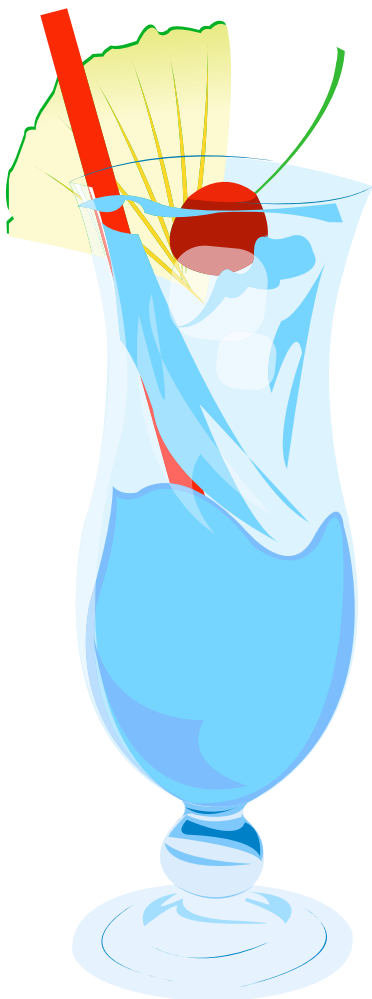
**Is it okay to drink after that?**

- A. Binge drinking during the first 3 months of pregnancy is thought to be particularly harmful; this is the time when facial features and body organs are developing. **However, the baby's brain develops throughout pregnancy so drinking alcohol at any time, not necessarily binge drinking, could cause damage.**

**Q. How can a couple of glasses of wine cause the type of damage described above?**

- A. Alcohol can interfere with normal development as a baby grows from conception to birth. This can cause a range of damage, or none at all. Factors such as the strength and amount of alcohol consumed, the developmental stage that is disrupted when exposure occurs, maternal genetics and metabolism can all affect the outcome.

## Activities for FASD Awareness Day



### **Mocktail event**

*Engage your community with a 'Mocktails for Mums' Activity*

*Purpose* – get people talking and sharing non-alcoholic cocktail ideas.

Make up a range of different 'mocktails' in large jugs.

For each jug, prepare an A4 scoring sheet.

Provide small taster cups and ask participants to taste, score, and suggest a name for each mix.

Ask participants to score (marks out of 10) for taste and overall appeal.

Invite participants to make up a name for the cocktail – provide a prize for 'winner'.

Get people talking about their favourite non-alcoholic cocktails and share their recipes.

Disseminate public health information leaflet e.g. Alcohol Focus Scotland *Alcohol and Pregnancy don't mix.*

## Mocktail recipes

**Banana Smoothie:** Put 1 banana, a pinch of nutmeg, half a teaspoon of vanilla extract, a cup of milk & two cups of crushed ice in a blender & blend into a thick smoothie.

**Berry Surprise:** Blend 1 cup of strawberries, a cup of pineapple chunks, ½ cup of raspberries & a splash of lime cordial together, serve over ice.

**Capuccine:** Shake some peppermint cordial & a dash of cream in a cocktail shaker, add crushed ice & decorate with grated chocolate.

**Cinderella:** Mix pineapple juice, orange juice & lemon juice in a shaker, add ice, soda water & a dash of grenadine to give a lovely berry colour. Garnish with a slice of pineapple or a cherry.

**Fruitburst:** Blend 1 apple, 3 carrots & a mango until smooth, then add freshly squeezed orange juice & 6 strawberries, blend on a low speed. Sieve, serve over ice.

**Grapefruit Ice Cream Soda:** Add 2 tablespoons of grapefruit juice to a glass with a small pinch of sugar & stir until the sugar has dissolved. Top up with soda water & a spoonful of vanilla ice cream.

**Golden Glow Punch:** Mix orange juice, lemonade, apple juice & ginger ale in equal measures in a bowl & serve over ice.

**Kiwi Cooler:** Blend 3 cups of crushed ice, 2 tablespoons of coconut cream & 2 peeled & sliced kiwis. Chill in the fridge for half an hour & serve with sliced kiwi.

**Lemon Daisy:** Put a large dash of lemon juice & a large dash of grenadine into a glass, stir & add ice. Top the glass with half lemonade & half soda .

**Highland Sunrise:** Place half part orange juice & half cranberry juice in a blender & whizz until thoroughly mixed together. Serve with a straw & crushed ice.

**Peach Smoothie:** Put 15oz sliced peaches, 4 scoops of vanilla ice cream, half a cup of orange juice & a small dash of milk in a blender & blend until soft.

**Seabreeze:** Shake 4 parts cranberry juice & 2 parts grapefruit juice with ice & pour into a tumbler.



Find more recipes at:

<http://www.netmums.com/family-food/party-food/non-alcoholic-cocktails>

## ‘Mocktail team challenge’ for preventing FASD

1. Set the scene by presenting the ‘market gap’ and the rationale for why mums-to-be would be interested in your business idea.
2. Create your ‘teams’.
3. Each team should have the following tasks:
  - Research including market research – what is the problem and what does ‘the market’ think the solution could be?
  - Product development – come up with a non-alcohol based cocktail that is healthy, delicious and affordable.
  - Marketing – create a brand image, packaging, and define the market for the product.
4. Take the product concept and make it real.
5. Present your business case to a panel of judges.
6. Select winner – engage local businesses to adopt the ‘recipe’.
7. Write a press release and invite local press to run with your article.

## ‘Create your own mocktail’ challenge

To make your own mocktail challenge, you will need a range of fresh fruits, fruit juices, soft drinks and syrups—and for the more adventurous, ice cream and a blender.



Invite attendees at your display stand to create their own novel alcohol-free cocktail by combining ingredients and blending together.

They can then name their mocktail.

Ask people to score the end result from 1-10 for taste and overall appeal – a simple scoring chart will allow you to compare and find a winner!

You can feature the winning entries in your press release.

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## Spread the word – alcohol and pregnancy don’t mix

You can support FASD Awareness Day by adding to your e-mail signature with an appropriate message such as:

**Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder is 100% preventable. Spread the word – alcohol and pregnancy do not mix.**

**Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)** is 100% preventable. By avoiding alcohol during pregnancy, you can protect your baby from **FASD**. For more information visit [www.nofas-uk.org](http://www.nofas-uk.org)

### **Prevent Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)**

There is no known safe amount of alcohol to drink while pregnant. For more information visit [www.nofas-uk.org](http://www.nofas-uk.org)

## FASD Quiz

### Answers on page 14

1. *What does FASD stand for?*
2. *What is FASD?*
  - a. The term given to a range of birth defects caused by maternal drinking during pregnancy.
  - b. A term used to describe mothers who drink during pregnancy.
  - c. A newly discovered condition that can affect young children.
3. *Why is raising awareness necessary?*
  - a. Because every condition has an awareness day.
  - b. To prevent FASD we need to be able to reach prospective mothers and their partners as soon as possible with accurate information.
  - c. To provide support to people who have been affected.
4. *Who is FASD Awareness Day for?*
  - a. Young women because they may binge drink.
  - b. Older women, who may drink not knowing that they are pregnant.
  - c. Women who are trying to conceive.
  - d. All of the above.
5. *What is the safe level of alcohol that a woman can consume when pregnant?*
  - a. One or two units per week.
  - b. One or two units a day.
  - c. There is no safe level.
6. *What medical advice is given to pregnant women about alcohol?*
  - a. Medical advice is to avoid alcohol if you are pregnant or trying to conceive.
  - b. One or two units per week.
  - c. One or two units per day.
  - d. As much as you like as long as you don't get drunk.
7. *How can alcohol damage the unborn baby?*
  - a. Alcohol cannot damage the unborn baby, only the mother.
  - b. Alcohol can damage the unborn baby but only if the mother drinks a lot.
  - c. Alcohol can poison the growing baby.
  - d. Alcohol can interfere with normal development as a baby grows from conception to birth. This can cause a range of damage, or none at all.
8. *Give one of the key FASD Awareness messages.*
9. *When is the most critical time for a pregnant woman to avoid alcohol?*
  - a. The last 3 months of pregnancy.
  - b. The first 3 months of pregnancy.
  - c. If the mother is expecting twins.
  - d. For the duration of the pregnancy.
10. *When is FASD Awareness Day?*
  - a. 9th September.
  - b. 9th November.
  - c. 9th March.

**During Pregnancy: No Alcohol – No Risk**

## Using social media to raise awareness

As well as creating an email appropriate to your audience, you can also add to your texts. This can be an effective method of conveying the message of no alcohol in pregnancy.

Social media can also be used to create a Pregnant Pause – a time when people come together to remember that alcohol and pregnancy don't mix.

You may wish to use one of the tags here or create your own.

You can find additional ideas for FASD Awareness Day at [jodeekulp.blogspot.co.uk](http://jodeekulp.blogspot.co.uk) and click on 60 FASDay ideas.

**SAVE A BABY'S LIFE!!!**

**<http://babybornfree.com>**

**Alcohol in pregnancy can cause brain damage, birth defects, prematurity, or death.**

**Pass it on.**

## BIG FREEZE FLASHMOB

Media Event to Support Charity and Children



**Raise awareness and help prevent Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder!**

### ORGANISE YOUR OWN LOCAL PREGNANT PAUSE

**Who?** You, your family, partner and friends. Anyone who wants to let the world know that drinking alcohol during pregnancy is not a good idea. Anyone can do this!

**What?** The PREGNANT PAUSE: A LARGE crowd that gathers in a busy public place to freeze and pose as pregnant. Women AND men pose pregnant for 9 minutes at 9.09am on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of the 9<sup>th</sup> month, September.

**Why?** To raise awareness about the risks of drinking alcohol in the 9 months of pregnancy and to let the public know that women need to avoid alcohol for the 9 months of pregnancy to have children without alcohol related brain damage known as Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).

**How?** Contact NOFAS-UK to get info. Plan your own PREGNANT PAUSE. Choose a popular busy location. Invite friends, colleagues and everyone you know! The more pregnant participants ... the more media and the more fun!



**For more information contact NOFAS-UK:**

Phone: 0208 458 5951

Email: [nofas-uk@midlantic.co.uk](mailto:nofas-uk@midlantic.co.uk)

Fax: 0208 209 3296

**Watch NOFAS-UK PREGNANT PAUSE on this website – click the button on the left**

## Sample media article 1

### Sample press feature article - Spread the word 'Alcohol and Pregnancy Don't Mix'

Preventing Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is possible and, on International FASD Awareness Day, 9th September, you can help spread the word.

FAS and FASD describe a range of birth defects that can result in damage affecting learning and behaviour. **If you want to be sure** that your baby will not be born with alcohol related brain damage, the message is clear - avoid alcohol for the duration of your pregnancy, while breastfeeding or planning to conceive. Pre-pregnancy advice is included because fetal alcohol harm can occur during the weeks before a pregnancy is confirmed.

Preventing FASD is possible, meaningful and necessary. In Scotland, there has been a significant rise in the number of women of childbearing age who drink heavily. *[Insert your local data on female alcohol consumption here.]*

Prevention requires a good understanding of the range of permanent birth defects associated with alcohol consumption. Awareness needs to be better among the general public because women need support from as many people as possible. We all have a role to play—as colleagues, friends, family members and partners—and our role is just as important as that of health professionals.

## Sample media article 2

Men and women with artificial pregnancy bumps will “freeze” for several minutes at various locations across xxx to drive home the message that alcohol and pregnancy do not mix.

With balloons under their clothes to simulate pregnancy, they will stand still as statues on September 9th to remind people that stopping drinking for nine months will protect their baby from alcohol related birth defects (FASD).

These include brain damage which can lead to learning difficulties and behavioural problems.

The message is being delivered by the xxxxx Alcohol and Drug Partnership in (...locations), and is part of an international effort to raise awareness of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. The date - the 9th day of the 9th month - represents the duration of a pregnancy.

AW, the Chairperson of the Alcohol and Drug Partnership said “Children affected

by FASD often show a variety of learning difficulties and behavioural problems and may be regarded as being wilful or undisciplined, when in fact they have little control over their behaviour. They are not being naughty; the damage to their brain and nervous system caused by alcohol means they truly cannot help it. As with all children, building on their strengths rather than their difficulties is the best approach.”

BZ (Health Promotion Officer or Midwifery Lead) said “Everyone can play a constructive role in raising awareness and preventing fetal alcohol harm, and families can be particularly supportive. It is vital that we reach prospective mothers and their partners earlier and more persuasively with factual information and practical guidance.”

Notes to Editors:

A Pregnant Pause will be held at (Date, Time and Place)

Events taking place are.. ...

For more information please contact .....



## FASD quiz answers

1. *What does FASD stand for?*  
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.
2. *What is FASD?*  
Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) is the term given to a range of birth defects caused by maternal drinking during pregnancy. Affected children tend to grow less well, may have physical disabilities and display a variety of learning difficulties and behavioural problems. These problems cannot be 'cured' nor do they fade with time but they can be prevented.
3. *Why is raising awareness necessary?*  
b. To prevent FASD we need to be able to reach prospective mothers and their partners as soon as possible with accurate information.
4. *Who is FASD Awareness Day for?*  
d. Everyone. This includes young women who may be more inclined to binge drink, and older mums-to-be who may drink more regularly, not realising that they are pregnant at the time. That is why medical advice is to avoid alcohol if you are pregnant or trying to conceive.
5. *What is the safe level of alcohol that a woman can consume when pregnant?*  
c. Research has not established a 'safe' level of alcohol intake while pregnant. What is known is that taking a 'pause' in alcohol use from conception to delivery will guarantee no alcohol related harm.
6. *What medical advice is given to a pregnant women about alcohol?*  
a. Medical advice is to avoid alcohol if you are pregnant or trying to conceive.
7. *How can alcohol damage the unborn baby?*  
d. Alcohol can interfere with normal development as a baby grows from conception to birth. This can cause a range of damage, or none at all. Factors such as the strength and amount of alcohol consumed, the developmental stage that is disrupted when exposure occurs, maternal genetics and metabolism can all affect the outcome.
8. *Give one of the key FASD Awareness messages*
  1. FASD is preventable.
  2. If you want to be sure that your baby is protected from FASD, avoid alcohol for the duration of your pregnancy.
  3. There is no known safe amount of alcohol to drink while pregnant.
  4. Everyone has a role to play in supporting pregnant women to avoid alcohol.
10. *When is FASD Awareness Day?*  
a. 9th day of the 9th month i.e. 9th September. This symbolises the 9 months of pregnancy.

Sources: 10 Facts about fetal alcohol spectrum disorders. Children in Scotland (2010). [www.childreninscotland.org.uk](http://www.childreninscotland.org.uk)  
Early years briefing: Fetal Alcohol Harm. Children in Scotland (2011). [www.childreninscotland.org.uk](http://www.childreninscotland.org.uk)  
Fetal Alcohol Harm e-learning resource NHS Education for Scotland [www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk/hame/learning-andcpd/learning-spaces/fasd.aspx](http://www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk/hame/learning-andcpd/learning-spaces/fasd.aspx)

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**Everyone has a role to play in preventing FASD**

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<b>FASD Awareness Day Action Planning</b>				
Where	Activity	Reach	Lead	Resources

Materials required;

Staff attending:

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## Examples of previous media releases

### NHS DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY MEDIA RELEASE

#### Our Midwifery Team Take National Campaign Lead



*NHS Dumfries and Galloway's midwifery team are pictured left to right: Jacqui Gatford, Midwife; Diane Dickie, Team Leader; Anne Anderson Midwife and Natalie Potts, Specialist Midwife*

### WHO'S out drinking with you tonight? That is the question being asked to pregnant mothers across Dumfries and Galloway

As part of a region-wide campaign, a reminder is being highlighted to avoid alcohol if you are pregnant or contemplating pregnancy. NHS Dumfries and Galloway is the first Board in Scotland to lead on this campaign. Natalie Potts, Specialist Midwife, said: "The current situation is that nationally we are unaware of how many children are affected by maternal alcohol consumption in pregnancy as there is limited research in Scotland regarding this. "There has been no research that has determined any safe level of alcohol consumption in pregnancy.

"It is known that no alcohol during pregnancy from conception to delivery guarantees no fetal alcohol harm, and so locally our message is that Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder is 100 per cent preventable."

### Chief Medical Officer for Scotland Support

Over the coming weeks and months, the region's midwifery team will raise awareness of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

The Board has been granted permission from Sir Harry Burns, the Chief Medical Officer for Scotland, to use his quote "Avoid alcohol if pregnant or contemplating pregnancy" as part of our local campaign to raise awareness of the risks of drinking alcohol during pregnancy. The poster 'Who's out drinking with you tonight' will be placed across 481 on sale premises across Dumfries and Galloway.

Natalie said: "We very much hope to get these messages out there in the public domain and ensure that women are aware of the potential damage alcohol can cause during pregnancy."

Further information and advice is available via GPs or the midwifery team.

## Examples of previous media releases

### FORTH VALLEY ALCOHOL AND DRUG PARTNERSHIP

#### NO ALCOHOL - NO RISK

Health experts in Forth Valley will be going behind bars at Cornton Vale, to advise women offenders that alcohol and pregnancy do not mix. They will demonstrate how alcohol can affect a fetus by showing the women a glass containing a broken egg and a unit of clear alcohol. Ten minutes after the two ingredients were mixed there was evidence that parts of the egg had 'cooked'. A similar process operates in human pregnancy which could interfere with the normal development of the baby.

In addition some of the women will be invited to participate in a choreographed t'ai chi session where instructors, with balloons under their clothes to simulate pregnancy will stand still as statues in a pregnant pause, to reinforce their support for the message the pregnant women should take a 9 month pause from alcohol.

The messages are being delivered by the Forth Valley Alcohol and Drug Partnership and are part of an international effort to raise awareness of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.

Dr Craig Sayers, clinical lead prison and forensic services at Cornton Vale said: "Everyone can play a constructive role in raising awareness and preventing foetal alcohol harm, and families can be particularly supportive. It is vital we reach prospective mothers and their partners earlier with factual information and practical guidance."

In Scotland more than 10,000 children are estimated to be affected by FASD.

Gillian Morton, NHS Forth Valley general manager for women and children's services added: "It is known that those who have an alcohol dependency or binge drinking pattern are more likely to have a child who is physically or mentally affected. It is not however known what specific amount of alcohol is entirely safe in pregnancy. All mothers want the very best for their babies, we would therefore advise that alcohol should be avoided when trying to conceive and for the duration of the pregnancy, therefore reducing risk to the unborn baby."

Children affected by FASD often show a variety of learning difficulties and behavioural problems and may be regarded as being wilful or undisciplined when in fact they have little control over their behaviour. They are not being naughty; the damage to their brain and nervous system caused by alcohol means they truly cannot help it. As with all children, building on their strengths rather than their difficulties is the best approach.

In addition to visiting the jail, the partnership will also be visiting community settings. Similar t'ai chi events will be held at Forth Valley Royal Hospital, Hawkhill Community Centre and Raploch Community Campus.

## Where can I get more information?

### **FASD Scotland** offers:

Information and awareness about the lifelong risks of prenatal exposure to alcohol. Information, support and advocacy to families caring for a child affected by FASD. Advice and training to reduce FASD Secondary Disabilities.

Training for professionals involved with individuals affected by FASD.

Partnership with other agencies to prevent FASD and Secondary Disabilities.

Contact: [info@FASDscotland.com](mailto:info@FASDscotland.com)

### **NOFAS-UK**

NOFAS-UK (National Organisation on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome) is a charitable organisation that is committed to helping individuals affected by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and their families. NOFAS-UK promotes education and public awareness about the risks of alcohol consumption during pregnancy. NOFAS-UK is a source of information on FASD to the public, press and medical professionals.

Contact: [nofas-uk@midlantic.co.uk](mailto:nofas-uk@midlantic.co.uk)

Tel: 0208 458 5951

### **FAS Aware UK**

A group of parents and professionals in the United Kingdom devoted to raising awareness about Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) and Alcohol Related Neurodevelopmental Disorders (ARND), to help reduce the incidence of birth defects caused by prenatal exposure to alcohol and to assist individuals and families struggling with the lifelong disabilities associated with FAS/ARND.

Contact: [fasawareuk@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:fasawareuk@blueyonder.co.uk)

### **The FASD Trust** provides:

Information on FASD and details of support groups for families affected, latest news, research, collaboration with NHS and other statutory bodies. The aim of the charity is to provide support for those affected and raise awareness of FASD. Also provides advice on drinking in pregnancy.

### **The Adolescent and Children's Trust (TACT)**

Their core work involves providing fostering or adoptive families for children and young people. They also offer training to carers and adopters in the area of fetal alcohol affected children. Contact: [scotlandenquiries@tactcare.org.uk](mailto:scotlandenquiries@tactcare.org.uk)

### **European Birth Mums Network of Children with FASD**

Designed to support birth mums in sharing their experiences on their journey.

Contact: [eurobmsgroup@yahoo.com](mailto:eurobmsgroup@yahoo.com)

Tel: 0207 692 1695

### **NHS Education for Scotland: Fetal Alcohol Harm - eLearning Resource**

Provides a comprehensive introduction into FASD.

<http://www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk/home/learning-and-cpd/learning-spaces/fasd.aspx>

**FASD is preventable – let's do it together!**

## Scottish Government

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This toolkit was developed by Theresa Martinus with Forth Valley Alcohol and Drug Partnership.

Additional input from Dr Maggie Watts, Scottish Government FASD Co-ordinator for Scotland, and Dumfries and Galloway Alcohol and Drug Partnership.

### Key messages for FAS Awareness Day

- FASD is preventable.
- If you want to be sure that your baby is protected from FASD, avoid alcohol for the duration of your pregnancy.
- There is no known safe amount of alcohol to drink while pregnant.
- Everyone has a role to play in supporting pregnant women to avoid alcohol.

**If you are concerned about your drinking, or the drinking of someone close to you, please contact your GP, midwife, health professional or local addiction service provider.**

## Some ideas for FASD Awareness Day activities!



- Write an article for your local paper about how everyone can help prevent FASD.



- Get in touch with your local radio and go on air about avoiding alcohol in pregnancy.

- Host a display stand at a local health centre or maternity unit with information about abstaining from alcohol.

- Have fun making up and trying out alcohol-free cocktails.

- Give it a competitive edge by awarding a prize to the one people like most.





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