

Research shows that alcohol damage to the developing baby can cause a wide range of disabilities.

Damage varies due to volume of alcohol ingested, timing during pregnancy, blood alcohol levels, genetics and environmental factors.

At the mild end, damage may be the loss of some intellectual functioning (IQ), attention deficit disorder, hearing and visual problems, and higher than normal pain tolerance.

At the severe end, damage may be severe loss of intellectual potential, severe vision problems, dyslexia, serious maxilo-facial deformities, dental abnormalities, heart defects, immune system malfunctioning, behavioral problems, attention deficit disorders, hyperactivity, extreme impulsiveness, poor judgment, difficulty with memory retention and retrieval, hearing disorders, little or no capacity for moral judgment or interpersonal empathy, sociopathic behavior, epilepsy, tremors, cerebral palsy, renal failure, heart failure, death.

Researchers have found a link between maternal alcohol use and sudden infant death syndrome.

Important FASD Facts:

- The prevalence of full Fetal Alcohol Syndrome is estimated to be 2 per 1,000 live births (more prevalent than Down Syndrome).
- Each year in the U.S. more than 50,000 babies are born with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders
- The annual cost to U.S. taxpayers for treating FAS is \$5.8 billion.
- Prenatal exposure to alcohol is the leading known cause of mental retardation and developmental disabilities among babies born in North America and the Western World. [Drug and Alcohol Dependence 19: 51 70, 1987]
- Most individuals with FAS and ARND have normal intelligence. (Streissguth et al, 1996 Report on Secondary Disabilities)
- There is no safe level of drinking during pregnancy. (March of Dimes, American Academy of Pediatrics)
- Even one drinking binge can cause damage to the developing baby's brain. (Science News, Vol. 158, No. 2, July 8, 2000, p. 28)
- Half of all women of childbearing age are drinkers. Half of all pregnancies are unplanned.

What is FASD And FAS?



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Fasstar Enterprises
Fetal Alcohol Syndrome: Support,
Training, And Resources

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What is FASD and FAS?

FASD stands for **Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders**. This is not a diagnostic term, but is an umbrella term that encompasses all disabilities caused by prenatal exposure to alcohol. There are five diagnoses under the FASD umbrella:

- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) with confirmed prenatal alcohol exposure
- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) without confirmed prenatal alcohol exposure
- Partial Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (pFAS)
- Alcohol Related Neurodevelopmental Disorder (ARND)
- Alcohol Related Birth Defects (ARBD)

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) is a group of symptoms seen in children who were exposed to alcohol before birth. Full FAS is characterized by:

- Growth deficiency, with height or weight below the 10th percentile
- Facial characteristics: small eyes, smooth philtrum, and thin upper lip
- Central nervous system damage (structural, neurological, and/or functional impairment).

Partial FAS (pFAS) is a diagnostic classification for patients who present with:

- Some but not all of the physiological symptoms of full FAS
- Central nervous system damage (structural, neurological, and/or functional impairment)
- Confirmed prenatal exposure to alcohol

Alcohol Related Neurodevelopmental Disorders (ARND) is a diagnostic classification for individuals who were prenatally exposed to alcohol and who do not have the facial characteristics of full FAS but who have symptoms of central nervous system damage associated with FAS. "ARND is indistinguishable from FAS except from the facial syndrome." [Claire D. Coles, PhD, National Task Force on FAS and FAE, September 20, 2002.] Fetal Alcohol Effects (FAE) is sometimes used to refer to ARND.

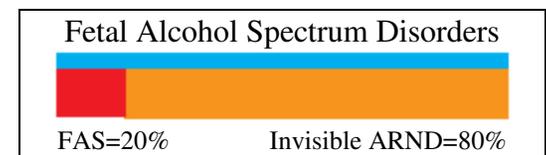
Alcohol Related Birth Defects (ARBD) is a diagnostic classification for individuals who were prenatally exposed to alcohol and who have physical defects such as malformations of the heart, bone, kidney, vision, or hearing systems.

Fetal Alcohol Effects (FAE) is a term that is no longer used. FAE generally refers to diagnoses other than full FAS. The term Fetal Alcohol Effects means about the same as the term Alcohol Related Neurodevelopmental Disorders.

The most problematic aspects of prenatal alcohol damage are:

- **Immature or inappropriate behavior**
- **Memory deficits**
- **Impulse control problems**
- **Poor judgment**

The affected person's ability to control behavior is erratic and inconsistent. One day they can function in a reasonable manner. The next day (or the next moment), they may be out of control, inappropriate, immature, forgetful, impulsive, and make unwise choices.



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