



# National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

Helping children & families by fighting the leading known cause of mental retardation & birth defects

## FASD PREVENTION

**While there is no cure for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD), they are 100 percent preventable when pregnant women abstain from alcohol.**

FASD is an umbrella term describing the range of effects that can occur in an individual whose mother drank alcohol during pregnancy. These effects may include physical, mental, behavioral, and/or learning disabilities with possible lifelong implications. FASD affects an estimated 40,000 infants each year.

**"We do not know what, if any, amount of alcohol is safe. ... Therefore, it's in the child's best interest for a pregnant woman to simply not drink alcohol."**



*U.S. Surgeon General Richard H. Carmona  
February 21, 2005*

### Challenges for FASD Prevention

- An estimated 5.3 million women in the United States drink in a way that threatens their health, safety, and general well-being.
- Nearly half of all pregnancies are unplanned.
- Many women do not know they are pregnant for several weeks (or even months) during which time they may drink alcohol.
- Health and social service professionals that provide services for women of childbearing age lack knowledge of, or training on, FASD.
- Alcohol screening of patients are not routine in health care settings.

### Strategies for Reducing Alcohol Use During Pregnancy



#### Public Education and Awareness

- Public service announcements and other mass media approaches;
- U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory;
- Official awareness days and proclamations;
- Alcohol warning labels and posters; and
- Signage at point of sale of alcohol.

#### Professional Training and Education

- FASD Curricula for medical/nursing students;
- Education and training on FASD and chemical dependency for social service professionals; and
- Mandatory education for professional licensure.

#### General Prevention Programs

- Routine, prenatal screening for alcohol use;
- FASD curricula for school children;
- Workplace health promotion programs; and
- Information dissemination through healthcare professionals and insurance providers.



#### Targeted Prevention for High-Risk Women

- Routine education about FASD and pregnancy screening for women in the substance abuse recovery;
- Drug education for pregnant teens attending prenatal clinics;
- FASD education for victims of childhood sexual abuse and/or domestic violence; and
- Science-based clinical interventions, such as motivational interviewing.