

# National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

Educating the public, professionals, and policymakers about alcohol use during pregnancy



# FASD: What Young People Should Know

## What is FASD?

**FASD** is an umbrella term describing the range of effects that can occur in an individual prenatally exposed to alcohol. These effects may include physical, mental, behavioral, and/or learning disabilities with lifelong implications.

Despite laws in every state that make it illegal for anyone under the age of 21 to purchase or possess alcohol, young people report that alcohol is easy to obtain.

## Young people can help prevent FASD by:

- Telling their peers about FASD
- Volunteering with local FASD or substance prevention coalitions
- Organizing an FASD presentation for their school or PTA
- Writing editorials or informational articles for the school newspaper
- Selecting FASD as a topic for a school project
- Requesting materials from NOFAS to be available in their school's health/counseling offices
- Creating a peer education program to teach others about the consequences of drinking while pregnant
- Encouraging school/teachers use NOFAS's K-12 prevention curriculum

## Young People and Pregnancy

Unplanned pregnancy poses one of the greatest challenges to preventing FASD. Alcohol is a major factor in unprotected sex among youth, increasing their risk of unplanned pregnancies.

- 1 in 5 high school girls binge drink (CDC 2013)
- Binge drinking threatens peoples' health, safety, and general well being (CDC, 2013)
- 21.6% of sexually active high school students report drinking or using drugs before sex. (CDC, 2009)
- One in every seven adolescent females in the US will give birth by her 20<sup>th</sup> birthday. 82% of these pregnancies are unplanned. (www.hhs.gov, 2012)

**Young women who are sexually active, not using contraception, and drinking alcohol are at risk for having a child with FASD.**

- Talking to a school counselor if they are concerned about themselves or someone else having an alcohol problem

**Use NOFAS to find help!**



**FASD is 100% preventable if women abstain from drinking during pregnancy.**

More than **47%** of high school students have had sex, but only **60%** report using condoms, and only **18%** use birth control pills.

www.childstats.gov, 2011

In 2011, **329,797** babies were born to women aged 15 to 19 years.

www.cdc.gov

Alcohol is the most commonly abused substance by female adolescents, with **39.2%** of girls aged 12 to 17 reporting alcohol use.

SAMHSA, 2007