

Prenatal exposure to alcohol is one of the leading preventable causes of birth defects. No amount of alcohol is safe during pregnancy. Alcohol can interfere with healthy development causing brain damage and other birth defects.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) is an umbrella term describing the range of physical, mental, behavioral and learning disabilities that can occur to an individual whose mother drank during pregnancy. The term FASD is not a clinical diagnosis. FASD describes irreversible brain damage, which may result in any of several alcohol-related medical diagnoses including fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS), alcohol related neurodevelopmental disorder (ARND) and alcohol-related birth defects (ARBD).

- 65% of women of childbearing age in Vermont are “current drinkers” (drank alcohol in the last 30 days) and, of these, 23% binge-drank (4+ drinks/sitting).
(2011 VT BRFSS)
- 35% of Vermont mothers reported their pregnancy was unintended. Unplanned pregnancy is a contributing factor to fetal alcohol spectrum disorders, a range of birth defects and developmental disabilities that can occur in any baby whose birth mother drank alcohol during pregnancy.
(2011 VT PRAMS)
- 64% of Vermont mothers report drinking at least some alcohol in the three months prior to pregnancy, and nearly one-third (30%) reported at least one binge (4+ drinks/sitting).
(2011 VT PRAMS)
- Alcohol use is much more prevalent in pregnancy than the use of other substances; 13% of women reported drinking during the last three months of their pregnancy, while 6% report smoking marijuana.
(2011 VT PRAMS)
- 26% of Vermont mothers reported they did not get advice from a healthcare worker to abstain from alcohol during pregnancy.
(2011 VT PRAMS)
- Healthcare providers **advising** women not to drink resulted in a lower prevalence of drinking during pregnancy. Healthcare providers discussing alcohol or asking how much women drank **did not** change drinking prevalence.
(2011 VT PRAMS)

FASD is Common

Nationally, FASD affects one out of every 100 live births.

FASD is Costly

The cost of FASD to society is high. According to the CDC, the lifetime cost for one individual with FAS in 2002 was estimated to be \$2 million for medical, education and residential care.

Annual costs for special education and juvenile justice (children age 5–18) are estimated to be \$36,573 per day for Vermont.

FASD is Preventable

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders are only caused by drinking alcohol during pregnancy. There is no cure, but FASD is 100% preventable.