

FASD AWARENESS MONTH/DAY 2020 PACKET

Working Together to Prevent Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASDs)

September is FASD Awareness Month
September 9th is International FASD Awareness Day



**National Organization on
Fetal Alcohol Syndrome**

Dear Colleague:

September 9th is celebrated annually as International FASD Awareness Day to promote education and awareness efforts on FASD. More recently, the month of September has been designated as FASD Awareness Month. FASDs are preventable by abstaining from alcohol while pregnant. Despite myths and misconceptions, there is no scientific evidence that confirms a “safe” amount of alcohol that will not affect the developing baby.

To recognize FASD Awareness Month and Day this year, the National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (NOFAS) updated this packet of materials to assist you in planning your activities and events.

Visit www.nofas.org/fasdmonth for updated details on FASD Month and FASD Day.

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If you have questions about the materials presented in this packet or about FASD Awareness Month and International FASD Awareness Day, please contact NOFAS Vice-President Kathy Mitchell at mitchell@nofas.org and/or NOFAS Communications Director Andy Kachor at kachor@nofas.org.

GET INVOLVED! HERE'S WHY

- No amount of alcohol use is known to be safe for a developing baby before birth.
- Exposure to alcohol from all types of beverages, including beer and wine, poses a risk to developing babies at every stage of pregnancy.
- A developing baby is exposed to the same concentration of alcohol as the pregnant woman.
- Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs) are preventable if a developing baby is not exposed to alcohol before birth.
- Avoiding all alcohol while pregnant (or if you may be pregnant) will absolutely guarantee that a child will not have a condition along the continuum of FASDs.
- An estimated 40,000 babies are born each year with FASDs, which can result in birth defects, intellectual or learning disabilities, behavior problems, and trouble learning life skills.
- The rates of FASDs are estimated to be comparable to the rates of Autism. Up to 1 in 20 U.S. school children may have an FASD.
- FASD-related disorders last a lifetime.
- Make a plan for a healthy baby--don't drink any alcohol if you are pregnant or may be pregnant. A woman may not realize she is pregnant for up to 4 to 6 weeks and could expose her baby to alcohol before she knows she is pregnant.
- If you become pregnant, stop drinking alcohol. Every day matters. The sooner you stop drinking, the better for your baby. If you need help stopping, talk to your doctor, or contact an addiction treatment agency/recovery program, such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA).

GET INVOLVED! HERE'S HOW

- Share the fact sheet information (page 3) with your contacts to help raise awareness about the harmful effects of drinking alcohol during pregnancy.
- Use the social media messages in the packet (page 5) to raise awareness of this topic in September and particularly on and around September 9th. Use the hashtag #FASDMonth and #FASDay to follow each other's messages. Share messages on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other social media sites.
- Enter the NOFAS Video Campaign! (page 7)
- Download or order new materials from CDC NCBDDD Website (www.cdc.gov/fasd) on the risks of alcohol use during pregnancy and FASDs to use in community events.
- Plan a local activity or event (page 6). Submit your FASD activity on the NOFAS FASD Month/Day Webpage: Let's work together to spread the word about FASDs and the risks of alcohol use during pregnancy by sharing our FASD Awareness Day activities! NOFAS will be posting awareness activities and events on its website, so please upload information on what you are planning to do for FASD Awareness Month and Day through [this online form](#). Your ideas can help others in their planning.
- Use the press release/sample article (page 8) in your media messages, and through your distribution lists, newsletters and other communication channels to raise awareness of FASD on September 9, 2020, International FASD Awareness Day and throughout September, FASD Awareness Month.
- Use the tips in this packet to get a proclamation (page 11) from your elected official (Governor or Mayor) recognizing September as FASD Awareness Month and/or September 9 as FASD Awareness Day (sample proclamation included).

SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGES

The following are messages about fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs) that can be shared through social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) on International FASD Awareness Day - September 9, 2020 and throughout the month of September. For other materials that can be used online, such as web banners and website buttons, please refer to the *CDC Materials* section of this packet.

The messages listed below are under 280 characters and can be used as tweets.

Use the hashtag #FASDMonth on all posts in order to spread the message that alcohol and pregnancy don't mix.

For tips on using social media, refer to the CDC publication *The Health Communicator's Social Media Toolkit* at <http://bit.ly/2OVcOKL>

1. No amount of alcohol use is known to be safe for a developing baby before birth. #FASDMonth <http://1.usa.gov/Q7BNal>
2. Alcohol use during pregnancy can lead to miscarriage, stillbirth, prematurity, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). #FASDMonth <http://1.usa.gov/Q7hytl>
3. Prenatal alcohol exposure is associated with a range of lifelong physical, behavioral, and intellectual disabilities. #FASDMonth
4. The best advice is to stop drinking alcohol when you begin trying to get pregnant. #FASDMonth <http://1.usa.gov/Q7hytl>
5. A developing baby is exposed to the same concentration of alcohol as the pregnant woman. #FASDMonth <http://1.usa.gov/1hCpMV2>
6. A developing baby's brain, body, & organs are developing throughout pregnancy and can be affected by alcohol at any time. #FASDMonth
7. Alcohol exposure is unsafe for developing babies at every stage of pregnancy. #FASDMonth
8. Exposure to alcohol from all types of beverages, including beer and wine, is unsafe for developing babies at every stage of pregnancy. #FASDMonth <http://1.usa.gov/Q7BNal>
9. FASDs are preventable if a developing baby is not exposed to alcohol before birth. #FASDMonth <http://1.usa.gov/1hCpMV2>
10. Identifying and intervening with children with FASDs early can help them reach their full potential. #FASDMonth <http://1.usa.gov/Q7hytl>
11. Alcohol screening and counseling is recommended for all adults, including pregnant women. #FASDMonth <http://go.usa.gov/ZvvQ>
12. If you become pregnant, stop drinking alcohol. Every day matters. The sooner you stop drinking, the better for your baby. #FASDMonth <http://1.usa.gov/Q7BNal>
13. If you need help to stop drinking, talk to your doctor, contact an addiction specialist or contact a 12-step fellowship, such as Alcoholics Anonymous. #FASDMonth
14. Make a plan for a healthy baby --don't drink any alcohol if you are pregnant or may be pregnant. #FASDMonth

LOCAL ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

If you have a local event, please submit this event to NOFAS for inclusion on the webpage for FASD Awareness Month. The submission form can be found at www.nofas.org/fasdmonth

Here are some ideas for the types of activities and events you can put on for FASD Awareness Month:

Local activities:

- Trainings
- Health fairs/booths
- Fundraising walks
- Art contests
- Community festivals
- Rallies at local/state government buildings
- Dinners/picnics
- Seminars/talks/presentations (organize "FASD 101" talks)
- Bell ringing (community gathering with local churches ringing bells at 9:09am)
- Distribute materials (NOFAS K-12 prevention curriculum, CDC materials)
- Meetings with legislators and policymakers

Communities and places to target:

- Sororities
- Doctor's offices/hospitals
- OB-GYNs
- Women's health organizations
- Schools (health classes, assemblies)
- Houses of worship
- Local health departments
- State capitol
- Community groups (youth church groups, scouting, MADD, support groups)

Awareness messages:

- Give out coasters to bars and restaurants with a prevention message
- Restroom stall stickers
- Holding up large posters near landmark sights
- Leaving behind pens that have an FASD message

If you plan to continue raising awareness about FASD and working on the issue beyond the month of September, the NOFAS awareness guide, "[Making a Difference: FASD Public Awareness Guide](#)," developed with the CDC FASD team, has information about how to start a support group or you own community organization, how to develop prevention activities, and how to reach the media and other important audiences.

2020 NOFAS VIDEO CAMPAIGN FOR FASD AWARENESS

Please visit the dedicated webpage www.nofas.org/fasdawarenessmonth2020 for the latest information and updates.

What sort of video should I submit?

Please submit a short video (about 1 minute) of yourself. In your video, please identify yourself and specify your connection to FASD (for example: individual with FASD, parent, expecting mother, birth mother)

Please answer the following question:

When I met with my (or my child's)... CHOOSE ONE:

- *Service provider*
- *Support person*
- *Doctor*
- *Nurse or nurse practitioner*
- *Midwife*
- *Teacher*
- *Social worker*
- *Someone else, e.g., behavioral health professional, occupational therapist, physical therapist, advocate*

I wish they had asked...

OR

The one thing I wish they had told me....

OR

It was helpful because...

OR

It was not helpful because...

Why should I submit a video?

This is your opportunity to use your voice to help organizations and agencies, including NOFAS, understand what families affected by FASD need. We want to know what your needs and priorities are. We want to hear from you so we can best decide how to spend our resources and tailor our message. Also: Everyone who submits a video will receive a complementary special edition NOFAS 30th Anniversary coffee mug!

2020 NOFAS VIDEO CAMPAIGN FOR FASD AWARENESS - CONT.

How will my video be used?

NOFAS will post videos throughout the month of September for FASD Awareness Month, through our social media and website. We will also pass on your messages to service providers and professionals in the FASD field.

How do I submit my video?

Please email your video to Andy Kachor, kachor@nofas.org by August 23, 2020.

The video can be in any file format (such as .mov, .mp4, .wmv, .avi). If you are unable to send a video file, you may send a link to the video online (such as a YouTube link) by email, or attach the video to an email (if under 20MB), to kachor@nofas.org. NOTE: If your video file is larger than 25MB, please use wetransfer.com or your preferred method of file transfer and send to kachor@nofas.org.

Video tips and instructions:

NOTE: You are welcome to submit a video, even if you are unable to adhere to every instruction below.

- **Most important:** Shoot the video in the horizontal orientation (landscape mode)
- Use the highest quality camera you have access to. A phone camera is good.
- Keep the camera steady or have the camera on a steady surface or tripod
- Have sufficient lighting that is even/balanced and without noticeable shadows
- Make sure the audio is at a good volume and free of background noise

Questions?

Please email kachor@nofas.org with any questions.

In submitting a video, you grant NOFAS the legal publication and distribution rights to your video and its content. NOFAS reserves the right to edit, modify, and alter all submissions.

SAMPLE NEWS RELEASE/NEWSLETTER ARTICLE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 9, 2020

Contact: (name of person submitting release)
(phone) – or – (email)

(your city, your state) – (your organization) is joining the cause to increase awareness of the risks of drinking alcohol while pregnant. The U.S. Surgeon General advises pregnant women and women who are considering becoming pregnant to abstain from alcohol consumption to eliminate alcohol-exposed pregnancies,¹ yet it is estimated that 40,000 babies are born each year with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASDs), an umbrella term describing the range of effects that can occur in an individual who was exposed to alcohol before birth.

During pregnancy, a developing baby is exposed to the same concentration of alcohol as the pregnant woman. No amount of alcohol use is known to be safe for a developing baby before birth. Exposure to alcohol from any type of beverage, including beer and wine, is unsafe for developing babies at every stage of pregnancy. FASDs are preventable if a developing baby is not exposed to alcohol before birth.

FASDs can impact a child's physical, mental, behavioral, or cognitive development. The most visible condition along the continuum of FASDs, fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS), is characterized by growth deficiencies, central nervous system disabilities, and specific facial characteristics. The number of children born with FAS alone is comparable to spina bifida or Down syndrome.³

Studies show that up to 1 in 20 U.S. school children may be on the FASD spectrum, a rate that is comparable to autism.

Prenatal alcohol exposure is associated with an increased risk of miscarriage, stillbirth, prematurity and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), as well as a range of lifelong physical, behavioral, and intellectual disabilities.

To prevent FASDs: make a plan for a healthy baby --don't drink any alcohol if you are pregnant or may be pregnant. A woman often does not know she is pregnant for up to 4 to 6 weeks. If you become pregnant, stop drinking alcohol. Every day matters. Because brain growth takes place throughout pregnancy, the sooner a woman stops drinking the safer it will be for her and her baby. Pregnant women that need help in stopping their drinking can talk to their doctor, contact an addiction specialist or contact a recovery program such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA).

Human service organizations, health care professionals, educators, and the public are called to action to work together to reduce the occurrence of FASDs by increasing awareness, becoming educated, and disseminating the message that women that are pregnant or might be pregnant should abstain from alcohol.

For more information on alcohol use during pregnancy and FASDs, visit www.nofas.org or www.cdc.gov/fasd.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROCLAMATION

What is a proclamation?

A proclamation is an official form of recognition issued by a state's Governor or other elected executive to call attention to a specific cause or event. Anyone may request a proclamation, and when doing so it is recommended that you provide sample language. After review, the executive makes a decision about whether to issue a proclamation. Governors and Mayors throughout the U.S. have issued proclamations recognizing FASD Awareness Day. More recently, proclamations have been issued observing FASD Awareness Month.

How to Get a Proclamation from Your State Official^{1,2}

Step 1: Research the Proclamation Process in Your State or Community

- Find your state Governor's contact information on the Internet by searching for "[your state] proclamations" or "Governor of [your state]".
- Find out the process to request a proclamation and determine your timeline. Many state offices need at least eight weeks to process a proclamation.
- If you know of other groups in your state interested in obtaining a proclamation, it might be helpful to work together. Only one proclamation per state will be issued.

Step 2: Create Your Documents and Contact Your Public Officials

- Write a cover letter to the Governor expressing your desire to have the proclamation issued and include sample language for the proclamation. You may use the proclamation template included in this packet or you may create your own. Once drafted, submit your proclamation. Depending on the process in your state, a proclamation might be submitted through the Governor's website, mailed via USPS, e-mailed, or hand delivered to your Governor's office.

Step 3: Follow-up

- Follow-up with an email or a telephone call one week after you send the original request.
- Offer to meet with the staff member or legislative aide who is handling the request in-person to answer any questions they may have.
- Be sure to ask that the proclamation be placed on the Governor's website. You can also request that the proclamation be placed on your state representatives' website as well.
- Write a thank you note to the Governor and your local representatives.

Publicize Your Proclamation³

- Write a press release and send it to the media (e.g. local newspapers, radio stations, and TV news channels). You may edit the press release included in this packet to incorporate information on why the proclamation was issued and who issued it. You may also want to include quotes from the government official signing the proclamation in the press release.
- Hold a news conference or public event when the proclamation is signed, inviting the media to cover this event.
- Share the proclamation with local organizations, government officials, colleagues, and other social networks and request that they display the proclamation on their websites, social media accounts, or in their offices.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROCLAMATION – CONT.

Resolutions

A resolution is similar to a proclamation in that it calls attention to a cause or event. While proclamations are issued by executive officers such as the President, Governors, or Mayors, resolutions are passed by legislative bodies. You can follow the same steps for seeking a resolution as you would for requesting a proclamation. For resolutions, contact your elected state representative and send your request to that person's attention. In some states, legislatures only meet for part of the year, so make your request early in the calendar year.

¹How to Get a Proclamation from your Governor - First Candle. (n.d.). *First Candle*. Retrieved June 16, 2014, from <http://www.firstcandle.org/october-is-awareness-month/awareness-month-action-center/advocacy/now-to-get-a-proclamation-from-your-governor/>

²Get an Official Proclamation. (n.d.). *RSS*. Retrieved June 16, 2014, from <http://www.freetobreathe.org/get-involved/educate-your-community/get-an-official-proclamation>

³Publicize Your Proclamation. (n.d.). *RSS*. Retrieved June 16, 2014, from <http://www.freetobreathe.org/get-involved/educate-your-community/publicize-your-proclamation>

SAMPLE PROCLAMATION

Human service organizations, health care professionals, educators, and the public are called to action to work together to reduce the occurrence of fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs). This can be done by increasing awareness and improving public health efforts in the delivery of the preventive health message that women who are pregnant or considering getting pregnant should abstain from drinking alcohol. In addition to this message, we must increase awareness on how FASDs may present in individuals across the lifespan and the ongoing need for services and support for individuals living with FASDs.

Whereas, Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) is an umbrella term describing the range of effects that can occur in an individual who was exposed to alcohol before birth; with fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) being the most recognizable condition along the spectrum; and

Whereas, Prenatal alcohol exposure is the leading preventable cause of birth defects and intellectual and developmental disabilities; and

Whereas, The exact number of people who have FASDs is unknown, but it is estimated that up to 1 in 20 U.S. school children may have an FASD, a rate comparable to Autism, and about 40,000 babies are born with effects of prenatal alcohol exposure annually; and

Whereas, The lifetime cost for one individual with FAS (does not include other FASDs) is estimated to be \$2 million, with a combined cost to the United States for FAS alone over \$4 billion annually; and

Whereas, Among pregnant women, 1 in 9 report any alcohol use and about 1 in 26 report binge drinking in the past 30 days; and

Whereas, Many women may not know they are pregnant for the first 4-6 weeks, contributing to late entry into prenatal care and presenting a barrier to optimal pregnancy management, particularly during the crucial early weeks; and

Whereas, The good health and well-being of the people of **(name of your state)** are enhanced by the support of a national effort to educate about and prevent FASDs; and

Whereas, The **(organization)** and the **(organization)** join with the **(partner organization)** as well as many dedicated volunteers, health care professionals, educators, and parent groups by participating in this promotion.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, **(Governor's name)**, Governor of the state of **(name of your state)**, do hereby declare September 9, 2020 as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Awareness Day [or September as FASD Awareness Month] and pledge to continue to partner with organizations, health care professionals, educators, and the public to raise awareness about our unified message:

"Pregnancy and alcohol don't mix."

RESOURCES FOR PREVENTING FASD AND FOR FAMILIES LIVING WITH FASDs

The following list of resources offers a starting place for those seeking information and support.

National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (NOFAS)

Founded in 1990, NOFAS is an international nonprofit organization committed solely to FASD primary prevention, advocacy, and support. They have created many resources including resource directories, a weekly listserv, and the Circle of Hope Birth Mother's Network.

National and State Resource Directory - <http://www.nofas.org/resource-directory/>

A list of resources and support services for people living with FASDs organized by state

Affiliate Network - <http://www.nofas.org/affiliates-partners/>

A network of FASD organizations from all over the United States

Weekly Roundup Listserv - <http://www.nofas.org/weekly-roundup/>

Sign up to receive a weekly email newsletter with the latest FASD news, research, events, and more

Circle of Hope Birth Mothers' Network - <http://www.nofas.org/circleofhope/>

A peer-mentoring network and support group for women who used alcohol or other drugs while pregnant and may have children affected by FASD.

Tools for Parents and Caregivers - <http://www.nofas.org/parents/>

A list of practical tools and resources

Resources for Adults with FASDs - <http://www.nofas.org/adults-living-with-fasd/>

A list of many resources available for adults with FASDs, divided into several categories

Education and FASD - <http://www.nofas.org/education-and-fasd/>

A resources for parents, teachers, and educators about FASD and the classroom

FASD and the Law - <http://www.nofas.org/criminal-justice/>

A legal resource for people with FASDs in the criminal justice system

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)

NIAAA supports and conducts biomedical and behavioral research on the causes, consequences, treatment, and prevention of alcoholism and alcohol-related problems. This site has publications and information including the brochures, *Drinking and Your Pregnancy* and *Alcohol: A Women's Health Issue*, available in both English and Spanish.

<http://www.niaaa.nih.gov>

Collaborative Initiative on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (CIFASD)

The purpose of this consortium is to inform and develop effective interventions and treatment approaches for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASDs), through multidisciplinary research involving basic, behavioral and clinical investigators and projects. We hope to develop an infrastructure to foster collaboration and coordinate basic, clinical and translational research on FASD.

<http://cifasd.org/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) works to prevent alcohol use during pregnancy by conducting research studies and implementing and disseminating evidence-based interventions. CDC also supports education and training activities for various audiences. For example, CDC funds health systems, academic, and national partner organizations to achieve practice and systems-level change by improving the knowledge and skills of health care professionals regarding the prevention, identification, and management of FASDs.

CDC FASD Main Page

<http://www.cdc.gov/fasd>

CDC Free Online Courses and Resources

<https://www.cdc.gov/fasdtraining>

Free FASD Materials

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/fasd/freematerials.html>

Alcohol Screening and Brief Intervention

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/fasd/alcohol-screening.html>

FASD Training and Education

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/fasd/training.html>

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) FASD Toolkit for pediatric primary care clinicians was developed to serve as the framework for the medical home management for children with FASDs. The toolkit provides tools and resources for primary care clinicians to equip them to better meet the special needs of these children and families.

FASD Toolkit for Pediatric Primary Care Clinicians

www.aap.org/fasd

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists has developed resources for women's health care providers in identifying women who drink too much and in providing brief educational counseling to reduce or eliminate alcohol use. Resources include a cell phone app, downloadable patient information sheets, current news articles, treatment referral information, and more.

FASD Prevention Program

<http://www.acog.org/alcohol>

March of Dimes

The March of Dimes helps expecting mothers to take charge of their health and to have full-term, healthy pregnancies.

Alcohol Use During Pregnancy

<http://www.marchofdimes.com/pregnancy/alcohol-during-pregnancy.aspx>

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome: Support, Training, Advocacy, and Resources (FASSTAR)

Offers training on all aspects of FASDs, including community awareness, prevention, and intervention. The FAS Community Resource Center (FASCRC), supported by FASSTAR, includes information on the history of FASD Awareness Day.

<http://fasstar.com/>

Community Resource Center

<http://www.come-over.to/FASCRC/>

FASLink: Fetal Alcohol Disorders Society – Research, Information, Support & Communications

<http://www.acbr.com/FAS/>

To Locate Addiction Treatment:

NIAAA Alcohol Treatment Navigator

<https://alcoholtreatment.niaaa.nih.gov/>

SAMHSA Substance Abuse Treatment Facility Locator

<http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/>

