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Background

Promoting awareness about Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) and the hazards of drinking during pregnancy has long been overlooked by many professionals as well as society in general. A lack of clear guidance has led to a popular misconception that the consumption of 'moderate' amounts of alcohol when pregnant will not have an adverse effect on an unborn foetus.

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Why it matters

FASD is a completely preventable spectrum of disorders that afflicts a wide range of babies and children in many different ways. These effects can be lifelong.

Providing clear advice that strongly advocates women avoiding alcohol completely during pregnancy will prevent their children from getting FASD; it is that simple.



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Questions to consider

- Do we take FASD seriously?
- How can we dissuade prospective mothers from drinking during pregnancy in the face of contradictory guidance (such as being able to drink in 'moderation')?
- How can we provide prospective parents with the confidence to ignore this erroneous guidance?
- How can we discuss the potential issues of drinking during pregnancy without being seen to dictate to people or accuse them of wrongdoing?
- How can we find out if children in care were exposed to alcohol in the womb?



03 Information



The best advice to women is to have a 'pregnant pause' (stop drinking for 9 months) whilst she is pregnant. This is also good advice for women trying to conceive, as the baby is most vulnerable during the early weeks.

To ensure that any potential problem is not exacerbated a woman should:

- 1. Not drink any more alcohol** for the remainder of her pregnancy. Research shows that binges and constant low level exposure to alcohol is potentially harmful to the foetus. When you drink, so does your baby. Remember that the first 10 days post-ovulation the foetus is generally safe as the placental maternal



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- Advise pregnant women to avoid any amount of alcohol at all costs.
- Encourage unsure prospective parents to contact their midwife or GP if they are unsure about drinking during pregnancy.
- Reassure prospective parents that accidental early exposure to alcohol will not necessarily harm the foetus.

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What to do

There are several straightforward pieces of advice that you can provide to a pregnant woman who is unsure about drinking during pregnancy or has already been drinking:

- Remind parents and prospective parents of the irreparable damage drinking during pregnancy can cause.

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connection has not yet been established. The risk commences once the placental blood flow commences and the foetus is connected to the mother.

- 2. Stop Worrying** - stress is also harmful for her baby - and herself. Women should be advised to speak with a midwife or GP about any concerns they may have, or call a charity helpline to receive appropriate advice.

- 3. Be prepared after Baby arrives...** If they have any concerns after their baby is born about any aspect of their health or development, they should speak to their health visitor or GP; they are there to help, advise and support them.