

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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International FASD Awareness Day

Every year on September 9th, International FASD (Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder) Awareness Day is observed. The first FASDay was celebrated on September 9th, 1999. This day was chosen so that on the 9th day of the 9th month of every year, everyone would remember that for the 9 months a woman is pregnant she should abstain from alcohol.

A mother's alcohol use during pregnancy can cause birth defects and developmental disabilities. Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs) is the name given to a group of conditions that a person can have if that person's mother drank alcohol while she was pregnant. These conditions include physical and intellectual disabilities, as well as problems with behavior and learning. Often, a person has a mix of these problems. FASDs are a leading known cause of intellectual disability and birth defects.

Some signs of FASDs can be physical or intellectual. They can affect the mind or the body, or both. Because FASDs make up a group of disorders, people with FASDs can show a wide range and mix of signs. Physical signs of FASDs can include abnormal facial features such as narrow eye openings and a smooth philtrum (the ridge between the upper lip and nose), small head size, short stature, and low body weight. Rarely, problems with the heart, kidneys, bones, or hearing might be present. Intellectual and behavioral signs of FASDs might include problems with memory, judgment or impulse control, motor skills, academics (especially in math), paying attention, and low IQ. Specific learning disabilities are also possible.

These problems are completely preventable. Ways to prevent FASDs are to not drink alcohol if you are pregnant; trying to become pregnant; or even could become pregnant without trying. If you are pregnant and drinking alcohol, stop now.

Red Rock Regional Prevention Coordinator (RPC) takes a proactive approach in reducing substance abuse among communities, specifically the non-medical use of prescription drugs, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, and underage drinking. They identify factors in a community that cause the risk of substance abuse and work to promote protective factors that serve to minimize the risk of substance use/abuse.

If you have questions regarding alcohol and pregnancy, talk to your doctor, nurse or other health care professional. For more information regarding FASDs', visit the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) website at www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/fas, the FASD Communities website at www.fasdcommunities.com, or contact Red Rock Regional Prevention Coordinator (RPC) at 580-323-9736. For more information on International FASD Awareness Day please visit www.Fasday.com.