

FAS

FETAL ALCOHOL SYNDROME

(Continued From Front Cover)

FACTS ABOUT FAS/FAE - The Preventable Birth Defect

Did you know ?????

- FAS is the leading known cause of mental retardation.
- FAS/FAE produces irreversible physical and mental damage.
- Behavioral problems of FAE children can be as severe as those of FAS children.
- FAS/FAE crosses all socio-economic groups and effects all races.
- Costs for one FAS child is estimated to be \$2 million over a lifetime.
- FAS/FAE costs the American taxpayer more than \$321 million every year.
- No amount of alcohol consumption during pregnancy is known to be safe.
- Of FAE Individuals between the ages of 12 and 51:
 - 95% will have mental health problems
 - 55% will be confined in prison, drug or alcohol treatment centers or a mental institution
 - 60% will have "disrupted school experience"
 - 60% will have trouble with the law
 - 52% will exhibit inappropriate sexual behavior
- Of FAE individuals between 21 and 51:
 - 82% will not be able to live independently
 - 70% will have problems with employment
 - More than 50% of males and 70% of females will have alcohol and drug problems



Wise Advice from Kids

Never trust a dog to watch your food. - Patrick, age 10

When your dad is mad and asks you, "Do I look stupid?" don't answer him. - Michael, 14

Never tell your mom her diet's not working. - Michael, 14

Stay away from prunes. - Randy, 9

Don't pull dad's finger when he tells you to. - Emily, 10

When your mom is mad at your dad, don't let her brush your hair. - Taylia, 11

Never allow your three-year old brother in the same room as your school assignment. - Traci, 14

Don't sneeze in front of mom when you're eating crackers. - Mitchell, 12

Puppies still have bad breath even after eating a tic tac. - Andrew, 9

Never hold a dust buster and a cat at the same time. - Kyoyo, 9

You can't hide a piece of broccoli in a glass of milk. - Armir, 9

Don't wear polka-dot underwear under white shorts. - Kellie, 11

If you want a kitten, start out by asking for a horse. - Naomi, 15

Felt markers are not good to use as lipstick. - Lauren, 9

Don't pick on your sister when she's holding a baseball bat. - Joel, 10

When you get a bad grade in school, show it to your mom when she's on the phone. - Alysha, 13

FAS

FETAL ALCOHOL SYNDROME

WHAT IS IT?

ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA's Definition:

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (fas), various congenital abnormalities in the newborn infant

that are caused by the mother's ingestion of significant amounts of alcohol around the time of conception or during pregnancy.

The principal symptoms of a child born with fetal alcohol syndrome are retarded growth both before and after birth; various abnormalities of the central nervous system; and certain characteristic abnormalities of the face and head. The latter include microcephaly (small head); short palpebral fissures (small eye openings); ptosis (eyelid droop); epicanthic folds (skin folds over the inside eye corner); short, upturned nose; long, smooth philtrum (area between nose and mouth); thin upper lip; and a small jaw. The central nervous system abnormalities result in mental retardation, delayed intellectual development, and various behavioral problems such as poor concentration, impulsiveness, and an inability to consider the consequences of one's actions. Behavioral problems may be the principal symptoms in persons who show little sign of facial abnormalities or mental retardation. Persons born with FAS may also have abnormalities of the upper respiratory passageways, heart, and joints and limbs.

FAS is apparently caused by the effects of ethanol (alcohol) or its breakdown product (acetaldehyde) on the developing human embryo or fetus. FAS occurs with a frequency of anywhere from 0.5 to 3 live births per thousand in Western countries. The syndrome commonly appears in the newborns of mothers who are chronic alcoholics. The more heavily a mother drinks during pregnancy, the greater the risk to the developing fetus. It is estimated that between 30 and 40 percent of all women who drink heavily during pregnancy will have a child afflicted with FAS. Although not strictly defined, the phrase "heavy drinking" can be quantified as a daily intake of 8 or more drinks, amounting to 4 ounces or more of absolute alcohol. Even moderate consumption of alcohol during pregnancy, however, may be associated with milder symptoms of FAS, and women are often counseled to abstain from imbibing any amount of alcohol shortly before and during pregnancy. Prolonging this period of abstinence throughout the duration of breast-feeding is also advised because various other disorders of the newborn have been linked to alcohol in breast milk.

*"Experience is not what happens to you.
Experience is what you do with what happens to you."
Aldous Huxley*