



# KNOW YOUR FACTS: Promoting Responsible Drinking in Hong Kong

THE HONG KONG FORUM FOR RESPONSIBLE DRINKING (FReD) is committed to promoting responsible drinking. The alliance seeks to engage Government, law makers, consumers and other stakeholders to promote responsible drinking in Hong Kong.

## FReD SEEKS TO PREVENT



\* Or while breastfeeding

## DO NOT DRINK WHILE PREGNANT



**There are no known safe levels of alcohol consumption during pregnancy or while planning to get pregnant. All types of alcohol incur risks to the health to the baby.**

Source: WHO, NHS, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), BabyCenter

Alcohol and pregnancy do not go together. Drinking while pregnant adversely affects a baby's development and increases the risk of premature birth, miscarriage, stillbirth, and fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs).



World Health Organization Research has shown that even minimal levels of alcohol consumption can increase these risks. Therefore, it is advised that women abstain from alcohol while pregnant, when planning to get pregnant, and while breastfeeding.



According to the U.K. National Health Service (NHS), alcohol consumed by mothers during breastfeeding can also enter into their breast milk, thus women are advised to not drink alcohol while they are nursing.



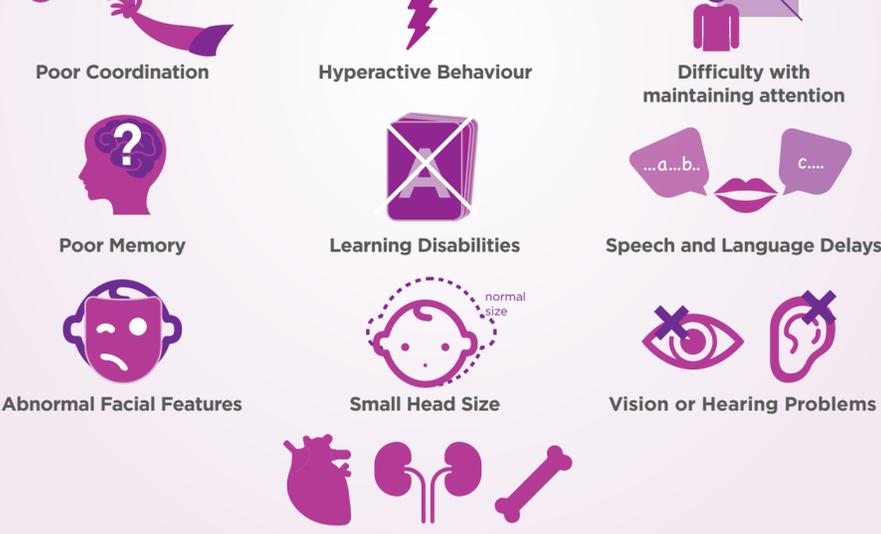
## WHAT IS FASDS?



### FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDERS (FASDs)

Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can cause a series of preventable conditions known as FASDs. Once alcohol passes from the mother's blood through the placenta to the baby, it may bring physiological and neurodevelopmental harm. These effects can include a variety of physical, behavioural, or intellectual disabilities, including the following:

### FASDS CAN CAUSE:



## HOW CAN YOU PREVENT DRINKING WHILE PREGNANT



**Q** I am planning to get pregnant. Is there anything I can do to prevent my baby from developing FASD?

**A** Women who plan to become pregnant are recommended to stop drinking alcohol as soon as they stop using birth control. As most women do not know they are pregnant until they are four to six weeks into pregnancy, they could unknowingly be exposing their developing baby to alcohol. You should also discuss safe diets and nutrition with your healthcare provider when you are planning to get pregnant.



**Q** I have just discovered that I am pregnant. While I've stopped any alcohol consumption, it is possible I was drinking alcohol while pregnant. What should I do now?

**A** It is never too late to stop drinking alcohol, and making the decision to stop is the most important step. Talk to your healthcare provider as soon as possible regarding your situation.



**Q** I heard that you can drink small amount of alcohol during pregnancy to relief stress. Is that true?

**A** There are no known safe levels of alcohol consumption during pregnancy or while planning to get pregnant. Alcohol can cause problems for your baby any time during pregnancy, even before you know that you are pregnant. Therefore, women are recommended to stop drinking alcohol once they have stopped using birth control and over the course of the pregnancy.



**Q** I consumed alcohol during my pregnancy. Will my baby develop FASD?

**A** While creating serious risks to your baby, drinking during pregnancy does not mean your child will develop FASD by default. If you have consumed any alcohol during pregnancy, speak with your healthcare provider.



**Q** Is there anything my partner, friends, and family can do to prevent my pregnancy?

**A** It is important for the partner, friends, and family to be supportive of the women's decision to stop drinking alcohol. Inform them that it is necessary to abstain from alcohol once deciding to get pregnant, even before the pregnancy has been confirmed. Everyone can contribute to improving attitudes to avoid unsafe drinking before and during pregnancy.



**Q** Are FASDs hereditary? Can they be passed on to a child even if the mother did not consume alcohol during pregnancy?

**A** FASDs are not hereditary. FASDs can only be caused by drinking alcohol during pregnancy and is completely preventable.



**Q** I have tried to stop drinking but I have been unsuccessful. What should I do?

**A** If you are unable to stop drinking, contact your healthcare provider, or local alcoholic treatment center for resources and support. It is also important to seek support from your partner, as friends and family, and ask them to help you to say no to alcohol, as it adversely affects you and your baby's health and development.



**Q** Is there anything I should be aware of when I choose my non-alcoholic beverage during my pregnancy?

**A** Be mindful that drinks that are labelled as "non-alcoholic" can still contain trace amounts of alcohol. It is impossible to remove 100% of alcohol from a fermented beverage, and so the term "non-alcoholic" suggests that only a minimal amount of alcohol is still present. Ask your healthcare provider for additional information on the safety of non-alcoholic beverages during pregnancy.



Source: CDC

## SUPPORT FROM DIFFERENT SECTORS

### HKSAR GOVERNMENT MEASURES

The Centre for Health Protection provides electronic publications on their website ([www.chp.gov.hk](http://www.chp.gov.hk)) to educate the public on drinking during pregnancy ([http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/advice\\_10\\_pregnant\\_women\\_eng.pdf](http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/advice_10_pregnant_women_eng.pdf)) and the prevention of other alcohol-related harm.



### HEALTH SECTOR MEASURES

The Family Planning Association of Hong Kong ([www.famplan.org.hk](http://www.famplan.org.hk)) provides a holistic range of clinical and counselling services in family planning and sexual and reproductive health to men and women of all ages.



### FRED'S RESPONSE

In line with its mission to promote safe and responsible drinking in Hong Kong, the Forum for Responsible Drinking strictly advocates abstinence from drinking for women while pregnant, planning to get pregnant, and while breastfeeding. You can find out more information at: [http://www.fred.org.hk/fred/drink\\_driving.jsp?menuN=menu\\_tips&subN=3#pregnancy](http://www.fred.org.hk/fred/drink_driving.jsp?menuN=menu_tips&subN=3#pregnancy).



## SO HERE'S HOW YOU COME IN!

Pledge your support  
**against drinking while pregnant**  
and learn more about responsible drinking at  
[www.fred.org.hk](http://www.fred.org.hk)

**SUPPORT US NOW!**