Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Awareness Day
9th September 2019

Partners Briefing

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Awareness Day originated in Canada with the first FASD Day taking place on 9th September 1999, this day was chosen so that on the ninth day of the ninth month of the year to raise awareness of having an alcohol free nine months of pregnancy. Since then the campaign has gathered global recognition with many countries now taking part in activities to raise awareness of FASD and the prevention of alcohol exposed pregnancies.

The Chief Medical Officer in Scotland has published the following guidelines regarding alcohol in pregnancy:

- If you are pregnant or think you could become pregnant, the safest approach is not to drink alcohol at all, to keep risks to your baby to a minimum
- Drinking in pregnancy can lead to long-term harm to the baby, with the more you drink the greater the risk.

The message we wish to promote relating to alcohol in pregnancy is ‘no alcohol, no risk’.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder is a lifelong condition that results from a baby being exposed to alcohol in the womb before they are born. This exposure to alcohol can affect how a baby’s brain and body develop and may ultimately lead to a range of physical, emotional and developmental issues.

The degree and type of impact alcohol has on the fetus will be dependent on the dose and frequency of alcohol exposure. It is also depends on what stage of the pregnancy and the fetus’ development the exposure happens. This is why the majority of children and young people with FASD do not have distinctive facial features often thought to be associated with the condition. It can often be a hidden condition until issues become apparent as a child gets older. The image and information below outlines nine developmental areas that can be potentially affected by alcohol during pregnancy:
As per the Chief Medical Officer’s Alcohol Guidelines the risk of harm to a baby is likely to be low if only small amounts of alcohol were consumed before the pregnancy was known or during pregnancy. Therefore, in most cases like this it is unlikely that the baby has been affected. However, if anyone is worried about alcohol use during pregnancy they can talk to their doctor or midwife. You can access the guidelines here:

https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Health/Services/Alcohol/safer-drinking

As part of FASD Awareness Day we hope to support your organisation to raise awareness of FASD and the no alcohol, no risk message. To ensure the use of appropriate and positive language relating to alcohol exposed pregnancies and FASD please make use of the following resources:

- Understanding FASD Summary Guide
- FASD Language Guide
- Common Messages: Guidelines for talking and writing about FASD

Campaign outcomes

- Increased knowledge of the no alcohol, no risk message
- Increased knowledge of FASD
- Commitment from staff to become ‘FASD Collaborators’.
Campaign messages/’asks’

- The Chief Medical Officer advises that during pregnancy women should not drink alcohol
- No Alcohol, No Risk #noalcoholnorisk
- Sign up to become an ‘FASD Collaborator’ to show your commitment in raising awareness of FASD with others
- Identify opportunities to raise awareness of no alcohol, no risk and FASD
- Note your interest in being part of the upcoming FASD Train the Trainer programme
- Healthcare Improvement Scotland have published SIGN 156: Children and young people exposed prenatally to alcohol which provides a guideline for clinicians in assessing and identifying prenatal alcohol exposure in children and young people
- For more information on FASD visit https://www.nhsaaa.net/services-a-to-z/fetal-alcohol-spectrum-disorder-fasd/

Potential campaign activities

- Host a healthy breakfast to share information and have a ‘Pregnant Pause’ at 9.09am
- Show or share a webinar/podcast/other such as:
  - https://www.acamh.org/blog/fasd-podcast/
- Individual pledges to support those who are pregnant by not drinking when in their company
- Attend one of the campaign stands for information which will be available at the health information stands in Ayr and Crosshouse University Hospitals
- Share the information and resources available on the NHS Ayrshire & Arran FASD website
- Set up a poster/information display in your community and/or place of work
  - You can access information via the NHS Ayrshire & Arran FASD website
  - You may also be able to access resources through the local health information resources service https://www.healthinfoshop.scot.nhs.uk/
- Ask children and young people to design a poster to promote the no alcohol, no risk message and share it on Twitter with @FASDAdisoryAAA
- Share the NHS Ayrshire & Arran FAAST Summer Newsletter which will be made available on the NHS Ayrshire & Arran FASD website in advance of FASD Awareness Day
- Post an article in your newsletter or intranet – available from FAAST
- Ask your corporate communications team to share messages across your organisation and use their social media accounts to share information with partners and members of the public.
Example messages for social media

- Dads to be, support your partner by joining her in an alcohol free pregnancy #alcoholfree #pregnancy #FASDDay #FASD #drinkfreedad
- Do you work in health, social care or third sector? Be an FASD hero and sign up to become an FASD Collaborator contact @FASDAvisoryAAA #FASDDay #FASD
- Visit https://www.nhsaaa.net/services-a-to-z/fetal-alcohol-spectrum-disorder-fasd/ to access FASD information for parents and carers #FASDDay #FASD
- Follow the Ayrshire & Arran FASD team @FASDAdvisoryAAA to stay up to date with FASD information #FASD #FASDDay
- I/we are supporting #FASDDay #FASD and raising awareness of the no alcohol, no risk message during pregnancy #noalcoholnorisk
- Plan for a healthy baby, avoid alcohol when you start trying to become pregnant and during pregnancy #FASDDay #FASD #pregnancy
- If you or someone you know would like help in stopping drinking you can find information here [insert local information] #FASDDay #alcohol #alcoholfree
- FASD Hub Scotland offers a free adviceline for parents and carers of those affected by FASD @FASDHubScotland #FASD #FASDDay

Twitter accounts to follow

@FASDAvisoryAAA
@FASDHubScotland
@FASDScotland
@NOFASUK
@Drymester
@CanFASD
@NOFASDAustralia

Contact us

Fetal Alcohol Advisory and Support Team
Tel: 01294 323406
Email: aa-uhb.fasdaivisoryteam@nhs.net
Twitter: @FASDAvisoryAAA
https://www.nhsaaa.net/services-a-to-z/fetal-alcohol-spectrum-disorder-fasd/