

**Spotlight: NCADD- Rochester Raising Community Awareness on Drinking During Pregnancy**

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NCADD- Rochester Area has been dedicated to a broad-based public education effort on alcohol and pregnancy for many years, including education, training, local media campaign and our Parent Networking Support Group. Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is an umbrella term describing the range of effects that can occur when a fetus is exposed to alcohol. Effects may include physical, mental, behavioral, and/or learning disabilities with life-long implications. Disabilities due to prenatal exposure range from mild to severe. Click here to read the NCADD-Rochester FASD factsheet in [English](#), or [Spanish](#).

***Some of the most common myths regularly reported in the media about women, pregnancy and alcohol include:***

**The science is incomplete and unclear. FALSE**

Since 1973, over 3,000 articles in medical literature describe the risks of using alcohol during pregnancy. The conclusion is so overwhelming and clear that, since 1982, the United States Surgeon General has advised women to abstain from alcohol when pregnant due to the risk of birth defects. Thanks to the advocacy efforts of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. (NCADD), since 1989, an advisory about alcohol and pregnancy has appeared on every container of alcohol distributed in the United States.

**Science only shows that heavy or binge drinking can harm a pregnancy and that "moderate" use is harmless. FALSE**

The more you drink the greater the risk of effects and the greater the potential range and severity. Heavy drinking throughout the pregnancy is linked to the most serious risk and full Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS). Research clearly shows that moderate alcohol consumption can also be harmful. Occasional drinking has been linked to more subtle effects such as learning and behavior problems such as attention and hyperactivity disorders, problems with judgment and understanding cause and effect.

**It is alright to drink beer and wine. Only distilled spirits or liquor are harmful. FALSE**

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Beer, wine and distilled spirits all contain alcohol, and all pose a risk depending on the amount consumed. The inference that wine or beer are okay because they may be more socially acceptable than distilled spirits demonstrates possible resistance to traditions and customs surrounding alcohol in society, not the facts. Women are overwhelmed with information on what they should not consume or be exposed to during pregnancy. Alcohol is just like some foods or cosmetics or household products that paranoid health officials believe could pose a risk. FALSE Alcohol is a teratogen, a neurotoxin that can cause a range of disorders from subtle developmental disabilities to profound brain damage. To even compare the effect of alcohol to the possible effects of foods and most other products, other than specific pharmaceuticals, is a false argument.

**CONCLUSION**

False premises lead to false conclusions. When those assumptions are reported by the media it often leads to misinformation. The so-called controversy the media often reports is really the false



controversy of myth vs. fact.

**There is NO safe level of alcohol use during pregnancy.** Alcohol-related birth defects are the leading known cause of mental retardation, birth defects and learning disabilities. Fortunately, they are completely preventable. If you stop drinking alcohol at any time during the pregnancy, it will help your unborn child. If you're pregnant, don't drink. If you drink, don't get pregnant.

*(Excerpted from the National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome report, February 2008)*

NCADD-Rochester offers FASD Parent Networking Support Group. The read more, [click here](#).

**For More Information on our FASD Programs:**

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[www.ncadd-ra.org](http://www.ncadd-ra.org)