



FASD Awareness:

September is FASD Awareness month. We use this time to inform people about living with FASD and supporting individuals and families who may be experiencing life with FASD. Over the last 40 plus years, FASD has gotten a bad rap. A big reason is that it was a newly identified disability caused by a substance that has become a very common item in most households (80 %) in Canada. Our society did not have the pathway and information on how to address this issue or conversation. Very similar to what we are experiencing with the COVID 19 Pandemic presently. As with society's reaction to COVID, individuals, families, scientists and the medical community did not at first have a good understanding of how the virus impacted the body. Similarly, over the first few decades after identifying the impact of prenatal alcohol exposure, the same experts needed much more information and data to create an informed and effective approach not only to supporting those impacted with alcohol prenatally, but to develop a step by step approach to preventing further prenatal alcohol exposure in all segments of society.

Today there is much more knowledge about how to support individuals who have been prenatally exposed to alcohol, more advocacy and recognition that supports may be needed lifelong and how to ensure those with a diagnosis of FASD are appropriately supported in education, health, justice and in society as a whole.

What we now need to focus on going forward is Prevention of prenatal alcohol exposure.

The answer is simple. No more alcohol use during pregnancy. The steps to attain alcohol free pregnancy is much more difficult. It will take our communities and society as a whole to place value and resources to support women and couples during childbearing years to ensure knowledge, understanding and community support are front and centre when needed. Alcohol is used as a de-stressor in our society at present. It takes away the difficulties of the day, the problems that follow us home and helps us to relax in the evenings or weekends. Unfortunately, it also takes away the limitless possibilities of our children's tomorrows when the alcohol stops the natural development of the cells during pregnancy.

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