

FINDINGS FROM THE 2019 SENATE INQUIRY INTO Effective approaches to prevention, diagnosis and support for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

FINDING: Prevention of FASD is everyone's responsibility

“To prevent FASD it is essential that people are aware of the risks; *understand that abstinence from alcohol during pregnancy is the safest option*; and that women and families are supported prenatally and during pregnancy to ensure the best outcome for their children.” (The Alcohol and Drug Foundation)

“When a woman’s partner supports her in not drinking alcohol during a pregnancy and breast feeding then that woman is more likely to abstain.” (Dr Sharman Stone)

“Around 50% of pregnancies are unplanned and therefore, women may be consuming alcohol without an understanding that they are pregnant.”
(Australian College of Midwives)

“Incorporate FASD and the harms of consuming alcohol while pregnant into healthcare professional guidelines and curricula.”
(VAADA)

Recommendations

“Prevention messages should;

- 1 Provide advice in line with current Australian Guidelines to Reduce Health Risks from Drinking Alcohol;
- 2 Include strategies to correct misinformation about supposed ‘safe’ timing, quantity and types of alcohol;
- 3 Develop a more accurate perception of FASD; emphasising brain damage and importance of diagnosis to improve management and outcomes for the child;
- 4 Emphasise that abstinence maximises outcome for all babies;
- 5 Reframe messages about ‘harm’ to messages about optimising the child’s health and cognitive outcomes, as part of a broad paediatric approach to neurodevelopment;
- 6 Develop a holistic approach encompassing women’s social and cultural context.”
(Murdoch Children's Research Institute)

Read the quoted senate submissions here:

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Community_Affairs/FetalAlcoholSpectrumDi/Submissions

