



## 6.1.5 Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder – Primary Prevention



FASD is the leading cause of preventable developmental disability among Canadians. Because health behaviours must be considered within the greater context of the lives of women and their families, women require a variety of support, education, and policy approaches to enable them to maintain their health. A number of national groups in Canada have endorsed evidence-based practice guidelines – Alcohol Use and Pregnancy Consensus Clinical Guidelines – to help practitioners support women around alcohol use.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Endorsed by: The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada; Motherisk; The College of Family Physicians of Canada; Canadian Association of Midwives; Association of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Quebec; Federation of Medical Women of Canada; Society of Rural Physicians of Canada; Canadian Association of Perinatal and Women's Health Nurses.

### Alcohol Use and Pregnancy: Consensus Clinical Guidelines

- Universal screening for alcohol consumption should be done periodically for all pregnant women and women of child-bearing age.
- Healthcare providers should create a safe environment for women to report alcohol consumption.
- The public should be informed that alcohol screening and support for women at risk is part of routine women's healthcare.
- Healthcare providers should be aware of the risk factors associated with alcohol use in women of reproductive age.
- Brief interventions are effective and should be provided by healthcare providers for women with at-risk drinking.
- If a woman continues to use alcohol during pregnancy, harm reduction/treatment strategies should be encouraged.
- Pregnant women should be given priority access to withdrawal management and treatment.
- Healthcare providers should advise women that low-level consumption of alcohol in early pregnancy is not an indication for termination of pregnancy.

Source: Carson G, Cox LV, Crane J, Croeau P, Graves L, Kluka S, et al. Alcohol Use and Pregnancy Consensus Clinical Guidelines. SOGC Clinical Practice Guideline. JOGC. 2010;32(8). <http://sogc.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/gui245CPG1008E.pdf>

