

Alcohol While Pregnant

Introduction:

As many people know you should not drink while pregnant but many people do not know the serious effects it can have on the fetus. Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can cause multiple physical and mental birth defects. The medical term they use to describe the harmful effects by alcohol to the fetus is “fetal alcohol spectrum disorders” (FASDs) each year in the United States as many as 40,000 babies are born with FASDs. According to March of Dimes, before completing 8 months of pregnancy drinking alcohol during pregnancy increases the risk for premature birth and miscarriages. There is no safe amount of alcohol to drink while pregnant, neither is there a safe time in pregnancy where it will not harm the fetus. The reason why I chose the topic of Alcohol while pregnant was because the topic interested me. Also, I believe it is a topic that we do not discuss enough in our culture. Many people do not even know FAS exists. This is a serious problem that affects many fetuses in this country and the worse part is that it is 100% preventable. I went to school with a girl who became pregnant and claimed she did not know for five months and she was a binge drinker. This made me increasingly interested in this topic because I wanted to know the dangers she cause her child because she drank while pregnant. Whether or not this individual knew she was pregnant and continued to drink. This is a serious issue that we face as a nation and I feel we need to make more woman informed about the dangers of drinking while pregnant.

Section 1: Background and Problem Statement

- **Web site #1: March of Dimes** (Score: 25)
- **Web address:** www.marchofdimes.com/professionals/14332_1170.asp
- **Information:** This Web site was easy to read as well as gave a lot of background information. It gave a nice overview and background to the dangers of drinking while pregnant. It also served as nice support system because they had contact information as well as other links for people who would like to continue their search for information. I believe this was a good source of information.

- **Web site #2: Alcohol Advisory of Australia** (Score: 28)
- **Web address:** <http://www.alac.org.nz/pregnancy.aspx>
- **Information:** I believe that this Web site was a good source of information. This site was simple to navigate. Although it was educational and used medical terms it was not difficult to understand or read, which is refreshing since most Web sites are filled with medical information that is not easy for the average person to understand. Not only did this site have information for how to prevent drinking while pregnant it gave the side effects and what can do if you did drink while pregnant.

- **Web site #3: Pregnancy and Alcohol (Score: 19)**
- **Web address:** www.pregnancyandalcohol.org
- **Information:**
 - I did not find this Web site a good source pertaining to my topic. The information was vague there was not a lot of information of the main site. I did not find it helpful, it basically told me what I had read on every other Web site but in a less informative manner. Fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) is one medical condition caused by drinking alcohol during pregnancy. FAS is a combination of physical and cognitive problems that occur in some individuals prenatally exposed to alcohol, it is 100% preventable as long as the mother does not drink while pregnant.

- **Web site #4: Center for Disease Control Prevention (Score: 28)**
- **Web address:** www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/fas/
- **Information:**
 - I believed this Web site was very informational and gave good background information on my topic of Drinking Alcohol while pregnant. Although the information was basic, it gave a background to what it was and how it could be prevented, as well as links to other Web sites and articles. There is no known safe amount of alcohol to drink while pregnant, so to prevent any deformities to your child do not drink any alcohol while pregnant. There is also not a safe time to drink during pregnancy either.

Section 2: Research

- **Web site #1: Moderate Alcohol Intake during Pregnancy and the Risk of Stillbirth and Death in the First Year of Life (Score: 25)**
- **Web address:** <http://aje.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/155/4/305>
- **Summary of the research:** In this Web site I found it had good research. Although the Web site was short with information it was thorough and had a lot to offer. It talks about a study that was done at Aarhus University Hospital in Denmark. This study was done over a seven year time period to determine the similarity between alcohol intake during pregnancy and risk of stillbirth and death. The research was made up of 24,768 pregnancies were included. There were 116 stillbirths, and 119 infant deaths.

- **Web site #2: The Clinical content of preconception care: alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drug exposures. (Score: 17)**
- **Web address:** http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19081427?ordinalpos=9&itool=EntrezSystem2.PEntrez.Pubmed.Pubmed_ResultsPanel.Pubmed_DefaultReportPanel.Pubmed_RVDocSum

- **Summary of the research:** To me this site was not useful at all. It did not go into detail about the research that was being conducted. There were no solid points that stuck out or any stats to back up what the person was saying. It was also very short and just repeated what I have read on every other Web site while doing this project, it did not bring anything new to the table and I was not impressed, nor did I become informed on the research while on this site.
- **Web site #3: Pregnant women's alcohol consumption: the predictive utility of intention to drink and pre pregnancy drinking behavior. (Score: 20)**
- **Web address:**
http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18954240?ordinalpos=15&itool=EntrezSystem2.PEntrez.Pubmed.Pubmed_ResultsPanel.Pubmed_DefaultReportPanel.Pubmed_RVDocSum
- **Summary of the research:** This article was short but to the point. Although there was not an overwhelming amount of research and information, it explained what study was done and the outcome of it, which is the most important thing. In this research at 17-21 weeks, 248 pregnant women completed questions about demographics. They were also expected to keep a calendar to keep track of daily alcohol intake until giving birth. The first weeks of pregnancy were significantly lower than before they were pregnant and the further into the pregnancy the woman got, the less alcohol was consumed. This article was also good because in the conclusions it stressed the need to measure for alcohol use multiple times during a woman's pregnancy as well as spread information and educate woman on the dangers of drinking while pregnant.
- **Web site #4: Drinking moderately and Pregnancy (Score: 23)**
- **Web address:**
<http://www.hawaii.edu/hivandaids/Drinking%20Moderately%20and%20Pregnancy%20%20%20%20Effects%20on%20Child%20Development.pdf>
- **Summary of the research:** Although I only gave this Web site a score of 23 it is not because it did not have good research. In fact the research was great but the Web site and article missed several fields that were on the grading sheet such as links. The research that was done was very educational, and visual. There were graphs and tables, which allowed the research to be shown in an interesting way. In this article it investigates amounts and patterns of moderate drinking during pregnancy that have been linked to developmental problems in children. Research has been done showing significant defects in children whose mothers drank five or more alcoholic drinks twice per week.

Section 3: Statistics

- **Web site #1: Sex Info (Score: 30)**

- **Web address:** <http://www.soc.ucsb.edu/sexinfo/?article=Dhuj>
- **Summary of the statistics:** I thought that this Web site was very organized; it gave good information but importantly good statistics. Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) is 100% preventable if women do not drink during pregnancy. One out of 750 children suffer from FAS, all races and socioeconomic groups are all affected equally one group is not at less risk for FAS they are all the same. The medical cost for children with FAS/ FAE over a lifetime is 1.4 million dollars. To me these numbers say something; it is very powerful and shows just how many women drink while pregnant and the real dangers involved if they do. It affects the child for their whole life, physically, mentally, and financially.

- **Web site #2: Alcohol Policies Project (Score: 23)**
- **Web address:** <http://www.cspinet.org/booze/fas.htm>
- **Summary of the statistics:** In this Web site I learned that in 1995, four times as many pregnant women frequently consumed alcohol than as in 1991; 51% of women ages 18-25 and 53% between 26-34, report the use of alcohol within the past month. To me this number is alarming in, it goes to show you either how many woman are unaware of the harmful effects of drinking for their unborn baby or that they simple do not care the harm that they are putting their baby in, It is estimated that FAS occur in 1 to 2 live births per every 1,000 in the United States each year.

- **Web site #3: March of Dimes (Score: 27)**
- **Web address:** http://search.marchofdimes.com/cgi-bin/MsmGo.exe?grab_id=6&page_id=2294272&query=alcohol+while+pregnant&hiword=ALCOHOLIC+ALCOHOLISM+ALCOHOLS+PREGNAN+PREGNANCY+alcohol+pregnant+while+
- **Summary of the statistics:** This Web site was insightful as well as gave interesting and relevant statistics. According to recent government surveys about 1 in 30 pregnant women report binge drinking. This means five or more drinks on any one occasion. In 2008, a Danish study found that women who binge drink three or more times during the first 16 weeks of pregnancy had a 56 percent greater risk for stillbirth than women who did not binge drink. To me, this is important for woman to know especially if they are pregnant, these kinds of numbers cannot hide the fact that babies are affected by FAS, and mothers are the only ones who can prevent it.

- **Web site #4: Alcohol Problems and solutions (Score: 20)**
- **Web address:** <http://www2.potsdam.edu/hanson/dj/InTheNews/MedicalReports/GeneralHealth/1040129968.html>
- **Summary of the statistics:** Although this Web site was well organized, had statistics and was put together nicely I do not find it helpful. Also, the info that it did provide seemed to contradict all the other Web sites I was looking at. For example it said that a medical research study involving over 130,000 pregnancies suggests that consuming two to 14 drinks per week does not increase the risk of

giving birth to a child with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. To me, this does not seem to make sense or to be accurate because it does not say which major medical research did it and also in all of the other research I did, it said that no alcohol was the only way to prevent FAS.

Section 4: Consumer Information

- **Web site #1: Alcohol and Pregnancy (Score: 27)**
- **Web address:** http://www.healthycanadians.gc.ca/hp-gs/know-savoir/alc_e.html
- **Summary of the information:** I found the information on this site to be very helpful, educational, and most importantly it was to the point and easy to understand. I believe it is very helpful to a person who knew nothing about this topic to get a good understanding of the health problem on this site. Right off the bat you learn about FASD, which is Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. Also the Web site right off the bat lets you know that if you do drink while you are pregnant that you are putting your child at risk for getting FASD. It explains to you briefly how you can give your baby FASD because you are drinking while pregnant as well as what to do if you are pregnant and drinking and give you tools to contact for help.

- **Web site #2: Alcohol Awareness (Score: 18)**
- **Web address:** <http://www.wpcc.edu/pdfs/ConsumerInfo.pdf>
- **Summary of the information:** This site was easy to navigate with easy to read information, although the information was way too brief and would not give the answers to someone who was looking to become better educated on alcohol consumption while pregnant. This site only had two sentences on woman who drink while pregnant and one sentence on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS). This site was not educational and I would not recommend it to someone who was looking to gain more information on this subject matter.

- **Web site #3: Fetal alcohol Syndrome (Score: 29)**
- **Web address:** <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/fetalalcoholsyndrome.html>
- **Summary of the information:** This Web site was a good site for people who are unfamiliar with the topic, and are looking to be educated, having the important information right in front of them as well as links to other Web sites to get further information. It lets readers know the major negative effects drinking can have on the fetus from mental retardation down to behavioral problems. Even though this site did not have a ton of information it had enough to let the public be informed quickly and easily.

- **Web site #4: Failure to recognize fetal alcohol syndrome in newborn infants (Score: 23)**

- **Web address:** <http://www.faqs.org/abstracts/Health/Failure-to-recognize-fetal-alcohol-syndrome-in-newborn-infants.html>
- **Summary of the information:** This Web site was user friendly, as well as informational. It got the information needed out to the public as well as gave background information, statistics, and examples of the negative effects of drinking alcohol while pregnant.

Conclusions

- **Section 1: Background and Statement**
 - **The best Web site**
<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/fetalalcoholsyndrome.htm>
 - **The worst Web site**
<http://www.wpsc.edu/pdfs/ConsumerInfo.pdf>
- **Section 2: Research**
The new information that I learned while researching the dangers of drinking while pregnant are that even one drink can be harmful to the baby because what you drink goes directly to the baby as well. I also learned that many women not only drink while pregnant but binge drink as well. Some of these women do not know they are pregnant and continue to drink, while others are aware that they are pregnant and still choose to drink.
- **Section 3: Statistics**
 - **New statistics I learned are that** 1 out of 750 children suffer from FAS. Also that FAS does not target one races, or monetary class more than any other. Also the only way to prevent FAS is for the woman who is pregnant not to drink.
- **Section 4: Consumer Information**
 - **The best Web site was**
<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/fetalalcoholsyndrome.html>
 - In my eyes this was the best Web site because it got the point across to the reader in a way that was easy to read as well as educational. It allowed the reader to know how serious drinking while pregnant is and the negative dangerous effects it can have on the fetus. This site also had contact info and links for future help and information.
 - **The worst Web site was** <http://www.wpsc.edu/pdfs/ConsumerInfo.pdf>
This Web site, in my opinion, was the worst that I found while doing my research and for consumer information. It was not organized and when you did get to that section of the Web site it was only a few sentences long with very brief talk about FAS. It also did not have other links to go along with it, nor did it have somewhere you could contact if you wanted more information.

Presentation Outline

In my presentation I will discuss the effects that alcohol has on pregnancy. FASD affects the fetus and leaves a child with mental and physical disabilities. The worst part of FASD is it is 100% preventable. As many as 40,000 children a year are born with FASD. There has been no found time in a woman's pregnancy that is safe and will not effect the fetus in a negative way, nor is there a safe amount of alcohol woman are able to drink. The medical cost for a child with FASD over a lifetime is 1.4 million dollars. According to recent government surveys about 1 in 30 pregnant women report binge drinking. I chose this topic because I feel Alcohol intake while pregnant is an important topic that people do not have enough information on, and this is the is an important topic that people especially woman need to be aware of.

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