

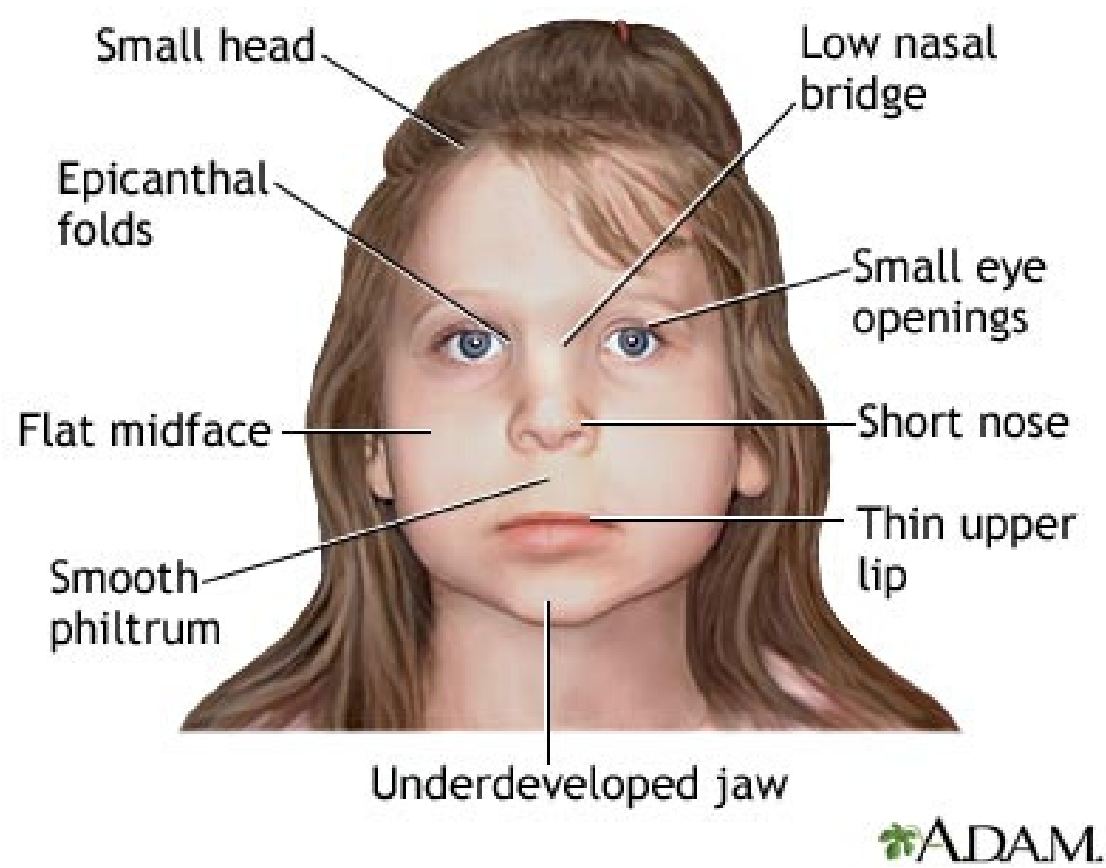
Foetal Alcohol Syndrome

What is Foetal Alcohol Syndrome?

Foetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) is a term given to effects and symptoms on the unborn baby when the mother has consumed alcohol during pregnancy. When alcohol enters the bloodstream of a pregnant woman, it's carried through the placental tissue that separates the baby's blood systems from hers, delivering the alcohol directly to the developing tissues of the foetus. This means that when a pregnant woman drinks alcohol, so does her unborn baby. The alcohol is 100% absorbed by the foetus and causes devastating damage to the baby's brain. This brain damage later results in serious behavioural disorders. The harmful effects of alcohol can damage the foetus at any stage of your pregnancy and isn't isolated to a particular stage of the pregnancy.

South Africa has the highest prevalence of foetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) in the world, more than 14 times the global average. South Africa has an incidence of 111.1 per 1,000 children, while the global average is 7.7 per 1,000 (Sources : American Medical Association journal JAMA Pediatrics, 21 August 2017 & WC Government, SA)

Symptoms



100% preventable
100% irreversible

Developmental risks of alcohol consumption during pregnancy

- fetal alcohol syndrome
- learning disorders
- attention difficulties
- vision problems
- memory issues
- problems with coordination
- hyperactivity
- hearing issues
- language & speech delays
- learning disabilities
- problematic reasoning & judgment skills
- sucking & sleeping problems as a baby

5 FAS Facts

- FAS is a **social disorder** that causes many of the expensive problems which plague governments, and all of us. On both a financial and personal level, we are all affected by the secondary disabilities and consequences of FAS: learning disabilities, early school drop-out, juvenile delinquency, poverty, chronic unemployment, sexual acting-out (promiscuity, teenage and unwanted pregnancies, prostitution, sexual assault, child-molestation, rape), AIDS homelessness, violence, crimes against property, theft, murder, gangsterism, alcoholism, drug smuggling, drug addiction and substance abuse.
- **Early diagnosis** and new techniques of therapy, medical treatment, education and residential facilities, could allow people with FAS to lead productive lives, and save our nation millions of rands that could be diverted for other social purposes.
- Neurological **damage cannot be restored.**
- The FAS-child/adult could **never exercise a choice** as to whether he or she would consume alcohol or not in the mother's womb. This decision was taken solely by the mother on his or her behalf.
- Research into FAS is one of **4 priority areas** of the National Department of Health, as well as the Department of Medical Genetics at the University of the Witwatersrand.

