



This fact sheet is for general information only and does not replace professional medical advice. If provided to clients and their family, it must be reviewed with them to ensure understanding and address any questions or concerns.

What is FASD?	Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is a lifelong disability that affects the brain and body of people who were exposed to alcohol in the womb. ¹
What causes FASD?	FASD occurs when a woman drinks alcohol while she is pregnant. ^{1,2} There is no safe amount of drinking during pregnancy. ²
How common is FASD?	FASD is one of the leading neurodevelopmental disabilities in Canada. ³ FASD impacts approximately 4% of Canadians (which is approximately 1.4 million people). ³
What are some of the common Signs/Symptoms?	Some of the common signs are: ² <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Difficulty with learning and memory;• Impulsivity and/or hyperactivity;• Difficulty with planning;• Challenges with self-regulation;• Difficulty eating/sleeping;• Understanding the consequences of their actions;• Difficulty controlling their movements.
What are some possible Related Disorders?	The following disorders may also be present when someone has FASD: ² <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mental Health Disorders;• Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD);• Intellectual Disabilities;• Language Disorders.
What are some risks of having FASD?	Some problems or issues associated with having FASD are: ² <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dependent living;• School difficulty;• Addictions;• Trouble with the law/ imprisonment;• Difficulties maintaining employment;• Sexually deviant behavior. <p>* Interventions and support may reduce the risk and/or the severity of these issues.</p>
How is FASD diagnosed?	FASD assessment requires expertise and input from both a medical doctor and a neuropsychologist. Other professionals are also recommended to be part of the assessment team including a speech language pathologist and occupational therapist.



Do symptoms change over time?

FASD is a lifelong disability.^{2,4}

There is no cure for FASD.⁴

What FASD will look like depends on the person's environment and level of support.

Things that may help reduce the effects of FASD are:

- A loving, nurturing, and stable home environment;
- Absence of violence;
- Involvement in special education and social services;
- Having a diagnosis.

How can I support someone with FASD?

Each person with FASD has both strengths and challenges and will need special supports to help them succeed with many different parts of their daily lives.¹

Early and ongoing intervention may help a person with FASD. Some examples are:⁴

- Training and education for parents;
- Behavioral and educational supports for the person with FASD;
- Medication to help with some of the symptoms.

Finding the right plan for each unique person will require some trial-and-error. Good plans will include adjustments, collaboration with others, and checking in often.

Support can be provided before getting a diagnosis. For case management, education and strategies, local health professionals may refer the client to social services, community resources, and available rehabilitation services.

Where can clients and caregivers get more information? (click on the links)

[CanFASD](#)

[FASD Support Network of Saskatchewan](#)

[Center for Addictions and Mental Health – FASD section](#)

[FASD Support Network of Saskatchewan –FASD-Tips for Parents and Caregivers](#)

[Disability Programs Specialized Services website](#)

Please keep in mind that a disability is only one part of a person. Identifying and fostering their strengths will be critical in supporting the person to reach their goals.

For more information on traditional practices that may apply, please refer to the Nishiiyuu department of the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay.

References

¹CanFASD. (2021). What is FASD? <https://canfasd.ca/what-is-fasd/>

²FASD Support Network of Saskatchewan. (2021). Learn about FASD. <https://www.saskfasdnetwork.ca/learn>

³Canada FASD Research Network. (n.d.). *Did you know?* [Home Page]. Retrieved August 14, 2024, from <https://canfasd.ca/>

⁴Center for Addictions and Mental Health. (2021). Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD). <https://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/mental-illness-and-addiction-index/fetal-alcohol-spectrum-disorder>