



How Social Workers Can Use SBIRT to Prevent Alcohol-Exposed Pregnancy

Prenatal alcohol exposure can have serious effects, including miscarriage, preterm birth, and fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs).¹ FASDs are a group of diagnosable medical conditions that are lifelong and can include mental health conditions, learning disabilities, sensory issues, and physical manifestations such as heart defects, hearing and visual impairments, and more.²

It is estimated that as many as 1 in 20 Americans has an FASD.³

Social workers can help prevent prenatal alcohol exposure by implementing universal alcohol screening.

- The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommends screening all adults ages 18 and older, including pregnant women, for risky alcohol use and providing brief counseling interventions, when appropriate.⁴
- Screening, brief intervention and referral to treatment (SBIRT) is an evidence-based, non-stigmatizing and highly effective modality for identifying and reducing risky drinking.
- Over 80% of providers reported positive behavior change in patients after conducting alcohol SBIRT with them.⁵

Nearly all pregnant women (97%) believe that screening for alcohol is acceptable during prenatal care and are willing to describe their alcohol use with a trusted provider.⁶

Learn more about SBIRT:





- Females aged 12 and older are the fastest growing group of alcohol users in the United States.⁷
- High-risk drinking among women, defined as more than three drinks a day or more than seven drinks per week, increased by 58% over the last 10 years, while alcohol use disorders (AUDs) rose by 84%.⁸

- Alcohol can affect fetal development throughout pregnancy, including before a woman knows she's pregnant.
- About half of pregnancies in the U.S. are unplanned, and most women will not know they are pregnant for at least four to six weeks.⁹
- Nearly 1 in 7 pregnant women report current drinking, and about 1 in 20 report binge drinking in the past 30 days.¹⁰

All types of alcohol can affect fetal development, including wine, beer, and liquor.¹¹

There is **no known safe amount** of alcohol during pregnancy.¹²

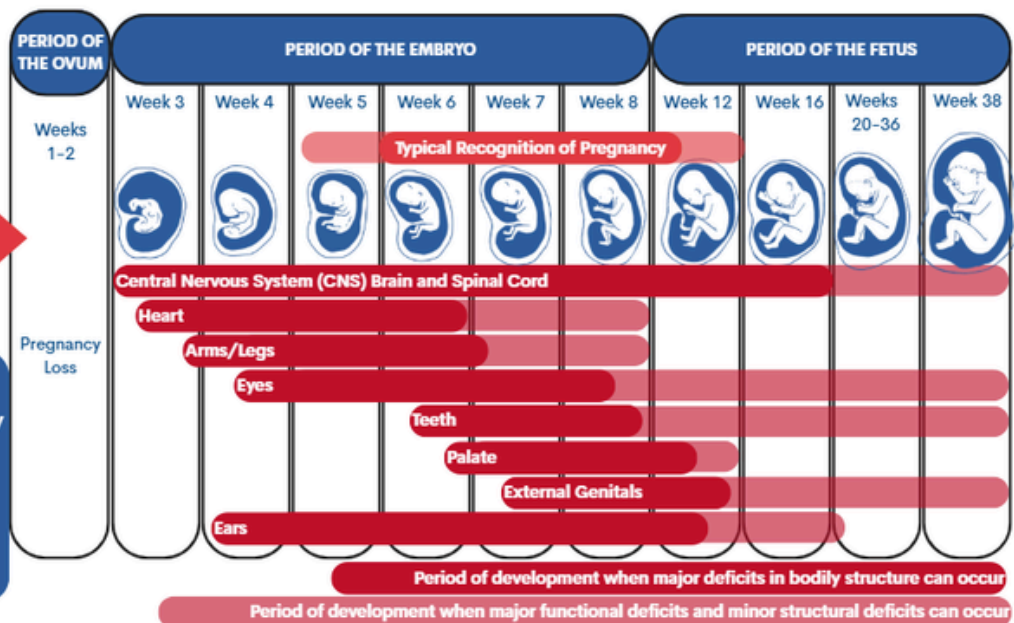


Alcohol & Fetal Development Chart

Period of early embryo development & implantation

This chart shows vulnerability of the fetus to effects from prenatal alcohol exposure throughout 38 weeks of pregnancy.

Adapted from Moore, 1993 and FASD United, 2009



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