



# International FASD Awareness Month QUIZ!



**FASD-CAN**  
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder  
Care Action Network

[www.fasd-can.org.nz](http://www.fasd-can.org.nz)



It's estimated that up to one in 20 babies in Aotearoa New Zealand will be born with FASD.

TRUE OR FALSE?



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## TRUE.

Manatū Hauora | the Ministry of Health estimates that 3%-5% of babies born each year will have FASD. There are about 60K babies born a year in Aotearoa NZ, so that's potentially 3,000 with FASD annually – or 8 a day.

*We have never had a prevalence study in Aotearoa NZ, so we rely on research from other countries with similar social and cultural backgrounds to us. In Canada research suggests it's around 4% of the population. An Australian study in 2025 put the figure at 3.64% – that's one child in every classroom in Australia.*



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FASD is the **not** the leading preventable cause of neurodevelopmental disability worldwide.

**TRUE OR FALSE?**



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**FALSE.**

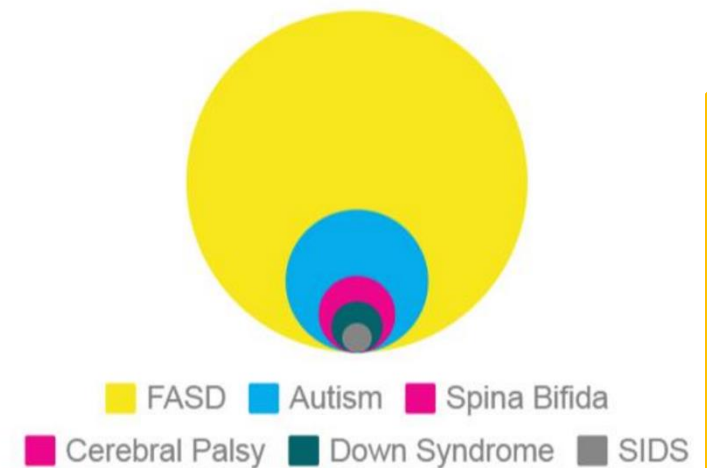
According to the World Health Organisation, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) in the United States and the British Medical Association (BMA), FASD **IS** the leading cause of preventable neurodisability worldwide.

*Australian studies show FASD is twice as common as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), spina bifida, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) combined.*



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It's OK for women to drink small amounts of alcohol occasionally during their pregnancies. The placenta acts as a 'filter' for alcohol, and there are certain points in pregnancy when fetal development is not affected.

**TRUE OR FALSE?**



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## FALSE.

There is **no safe time and no safe amount** of alcohol when pregnant. Alcohol goes straight through the placenta to your pēpi, whose internal organs cannot process it like an adult can, and it may cause lifelong damage. The Ministry of Health advise alcohol should be totally avoided when pregnant, planning pregnancy or breastfeeding.

*40-50% of pregnancies in NZ are unplanned – if your pregnancy has been accidentally alcohol-exposed, the best time to stop drinking is now – seek support if necessary from your doctor. Download this booklet for initial information on stopping. If you are NOT planning for a baby, use contraception.*



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Men drinking alcohol pre-conception can contribute to symptoms associated with FASD in the child.

TRUE OR FALSE?



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## TRUE.

Recent advances in epigenetic research confirm that alcohol use in men plays a role in fetal development. Deficiencies in brain size, heart formation, cognitive and motor abilities (noted as being symptoms of FASD) were linked to paternal alcohol use even with no maternal alcohol consumption.

*It's recommended that men stop drinking for at least 60 days before conception. Most alcohol consumption by women takes place at home, and is often instigated by her partner. It's very helpful for women to have support from partners in abstaining throughout pregnancy, too!*



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When we think about the harm that alcohol does to others, car crashes are the worst.

TRUE OR FALSE?



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**FALSE.**

A 2024 study by Massey University was the **first in the world** to include FASD in an alcohol 'Harm to Others' (HTO) survey.

- Alcohol-fuelled violence came in third with 3.4% of the harm.
- Car crashes were second, at 6.3% of harm.
- FASD was identified as by far the main contributor at **90.3%** of the alcohol harm to others.


*[Click here to find out more and read the study.](#)*



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Alcohol is worse than other substances when it comes to resulting brain differences and damage to major organs for the unborn baby in pregnancy.

TRUE OR FALSE?



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**TRUE.**

Alcohol, along with some other drugs, is a ‘teratogen’ – a chemical which can cause congenital disabilities in a fetus.

*A recent study at the University of Otago found alcohol to be the number one worst substance in NZ due to its prevalence in society and the health consequences for both those using it and those around them.*

[Click here](#) to read the study.



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It's easy to tell at a glance whether or not someone has Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

TRUE OR FALSE?



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**FALSE.**

The 'sentinel facial features' which many associate with FASD only occur in less than 10% of people.

*FASD is known as 'the hidden disability' because you usually can't tell by looking at someone if they are living with FASD – they may be chatty, sociable and fun. Problems with memory, executive function and emotional regulation are often not obvious either – but they exist and will need lifelong support.*



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Tamariki and rangatahi with FASD are just naughty and need firm consequences to make them behave.

TRUE OR FALSE?



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**FALSE.**

Consequences are not effective for people with FASD. Memory and executive function issues can make it hard for them to link an event to a consequence. Behavioural symptoms are not intentional misbehavior, but a result of brain injury – and trying to punish a disability will simply create more trauma.

*It's not a matter of 'won't' but 'can't - yet'.  
Think 'brain not blame' – then reframe.*



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How many co-occurring conditions are commonly associated with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder?

A: 115

B: 428

C: 623



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## B: 428.

FASD has a very high number of comorbidities, far exceeding those associated with other neurodevelopmental disorders. These include ADHD (over 85%), learning disorders, mood and anxiety disorders. Other congenital issues such as heart defects, kidney problems, skeletal abnormalities and hearing or vision impairments are also common.



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People with FASD are 19 x more likely to encounter the Criminal Justice System (CJS) than neurotypical people.

TRUE OR FALSE?



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**True.**

This does NOT mean that those with FASD are pre-disposed to criminality, but that specific vulnerabilities including impulsivity, suggestibility, compliance, trauma and confabulation make them more likely to encounter the Criminal Justice System. Learning about these can mitigate risk.


*To find out more, [watch this FASD-CAN webinar](#) with Dr David Junior Gilbert of the University of Salford, Manchester who has been conducting ongoing global research into this subject.*



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According to a 2024 study commissioned by Manatū Hauora / the Ministry of Health, FASD has a cost of society in Aotearoa NZ of:

A: \$1.2 billion      B: \$2.4 billion      C: \$4.8 billion



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## C - \$4.8 billion.

The report found that costs associated with FASD are far higher than those from other forms of alcohol harm. The total costs of all harms in 2023 attributable to alcohol was approximately \$9.1 billion – FASD accounted for more than half of that total.


*Much of this cost would be mitigated by investment in early assessment and appropriate interventions.  
[Click here to read the report.](#)*



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Many people with FASD can have an average or even above average IQ.

TRUE OR FALSE?



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## TRUE.

Only an estimated 20% of those with FASD have an IQ less than 70, which is deemed an intellectual disability. But most people diagnosed with FASD who have an average or higher IQ will still have impairments in several neurodevelopmental domains as well as possible physical issues which will make it hard for them to live independently.

*If an IQ of less than 70 can't be proven via diagnosis, those with FASD are ineligible to receive Disability Support Services (DSS) – this MUST change to support our whānau.*



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'With shared strength, guidance and wisdom, those with FASD can grow and achieve'.

— FASD-CAN Inc

TRUE OR FALSE?



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## TRUE!

Common strengths found among people with FASD include being friendly, likeable, and affectionate; helpful and generous, outgoing and highly verbal; insightful, creative and musical; determined, hardworking, willing, and persistent; forgiving, non-judgmental and caring; having great mechanical and athletic abilities; being good with children and animals and much more... but they do need understanding and support to achieve their potential.



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