

FASD Awareness Month Aotearoa QUIZ 2026



FASD-CAN
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
Care Action Network

www.fasd-can.org.nz

What's this year's Aotearoa FASD Awareness Day theme?

A: Break the Silence

B: FASD: It Takes a Community

C: Think Before You Drink



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B – FASD: It Takes a Community

The theme highlights the power of collective support in creating a society where people with FASD and their families can thrive, framing FASD as a whole-community issue, rather than something whānau have to face alone.



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It's estimated that up to 5 babies will be born with FASD every day in Aotearoa New Zealand.

TRUE OR FALSE?



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FALSE.

According to new FASD-CAN research, 2%-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 around **8** per day.

We have never had a formal prevalence study in Aotearoa NZ. In Canada, research suggests it's around 4% of their population. An Australian study in 2025 put the figure at 3.64% – that's one child in every classroom in Australia. Any estimate of FASD numbers globally faces a lack of data and is likely to be conservative.



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Most women who consume alcohol in early pregnancy do so before they realise they're pregnant.

TRUE OR FALSE?



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TRUE.

The Growing Up in NZ study found 71% of women reported using alcohol prior to pregnancy or before becoming aware of it, with 23% continuing in the first trimester, dropping to 13% after.

If your pregnancy has been accidentally alcohol-exposed, the best time to stop drinking is right now. If you have difficulty stopping, get support from your doctor. It's nothing to be ashamed of and will lead to the best outcomes for your baby.

Download this booklet for initial information on stopping.

If you are NOT planning for a baby, use contraception.



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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 to drink when pregnant. Alcohol goes straight through the placenta to the pēpi / baby, whose organs cannot process it like an adult's can, causing lifelong damage.

The Ministry of Health NZ, and all other Surgeon Generals around the world advise that alcohol should be totally avoided when pregnant – and when planning pregnancy.



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Tane / men drinking alcohol before conception can contribute to symptoms associated with FASD in their baby.

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, cognitive and motor abilities (all 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 90 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 the main contributor by far 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 2024 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 can be naughty and need firm consequences to make them behave.

TRUE OR FALSE?



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FALSE.

Punishments and 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. Punishing a disability creates 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 problems such as heart defects, kidney problems, joint or bone abnormalities and hearing, dental or vision issues 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 an annual cost to our 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, (an intellectual disability or ID). 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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As of 2025, Aotearoa NZ has its own specific, relevant online resource to promote healthy, alcohol-free pregnancies.

TRUE OR FALSE?



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TRUE.

In 2025 Te Whatu Ora / Health NZ launched a new website and a national campaign to raise awareness of the dangers alcohol in pregnancy. It calls on all of us to play our part in enabling our tamariki to have the best start in life.

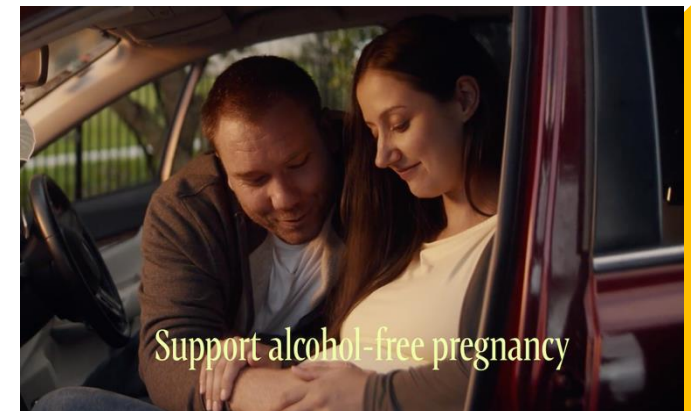
“We all have a role to play to protect future generations and support alcohol-free pregnancy.”

Check it out here: www.futurewithin.co.nz



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

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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 great with children and animals and much more... but they need understanding and support to achieve their potential.



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Thank you for helping to raise awareness about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder in Aotearoa New Zealand!

FASD-CAN supports people with FASD, their parents, caregivers, whānau and the professionals who work with them.

For education, training and help about FASD head to our website: <https://www.fasd-can.org.nz>



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