

NE LESSON CODE NR-000-17

Fact or Myth - "Even one drink during pregnancy can be harmful!"

LESSON DESCRIPTION

This class is designed to inform pregnant, breastfeeding and postpartum women about taking care of their health and how drinking alcohol during pregnancy can affect their baby. The video is designed to create awareness about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) and how women can get help if they or someone they know has a problem with alcohol. Participants should be given a choice to attend and not automatically assigned to this class.

OBJECTIVES

Participants will be able to:

- Identify three things to do to stay healthy during pregnancy.
- Name two reasons to quit drinking during pregnancy.
- Identify resources for getting help to stop drinking.

MATERIALS

Brochure: National Institute of Health (NIH) publication- *Drinking and your Pregnancy, No. 05-5610*

Video: *Don't Drink for Two: Prevent Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders*, stock no. DV0505

Background information for instructors

- This class is designed to bring awareness of different factors that affect women's health such as nutrition, exercise and alcohol use and to discuss the effects of drinking during pregnancy.
- Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD) describes a group of permanent birth defects caused by maternal consumption of alcohol during pregnancy.
- The only prevention for FASD is to not drink during pregnancy.
- FASD is completely preventable.
- Help is available for women who want to stop drinking.

A class discussion followed by the video *Don't Drink for Two: Prevent Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders* will be used to emphasize the message of alcohol use and pregnancy. Even one drink may be harmful to the baby and although the effects are not reversible, they can be reduced.

Use the ice-breaker below or any other ice-breaker that will help the participants feel comfortable with each other.

ICE BREAKER

Begin with self introduction and explain your role in the WIC clinic. Ask the participants to introduce themselves and share one thing that they do to stay healthy.

After everyone has had a turn, share with the group three things you do to stay healthy.

Examples:

1. Eating habits – eat more fruits and vegetables
2. Exercise more and find fun things to do - Walk for at least 30 minutes each day
3. Get plenty of rest
4. Laugh and relax

Ask the participants if they have other suggestions. Go over 5 tips on taking care of one's health.

1. Eating healthy - Discuss ways to choose and cook healthy foods and eat a balanced meal.
2. Eating foods rich in iron, folic acid, vitamin A, C and those low in fat.
3. Getting regular physical activity. Going for walks, playing with your kids and other fun activities
4. Keeping up with doctor's appointments and follow instructions.
5. Avoiding alcohol - during pregnancy everything a woman eats and drinks can affect the baby.

DISCUSSION

It is important to know about the benefits of nutrition, breastfeeding, exercise and healthy lifestyle as women make decisions concerning themselves and their families. Women's pre-pregnancy health during childbearing years is crucial for ensuring a healthy pregnancy and healthy baby.

We often get confusing messages about drinking alcohol during pregnancy. The information we are sharing is to help you if you are pregnant or plan to have a baby. Or it may be that someone you know could benefit from this information.

Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can hurt the baby. Babies may be born small and have life long problems that could be mild or severe such as:

- Physical affects – facial features, stunted growth, vision and hearing problems
- Mental affects - not able to understand directions to do simple tasks
- Behavioral issues – concentrating and learning at school
- Social issues – not being able to get along with others
- Emotional issues – eating and sleeping disorders, anxiety, depression

All these conditions are part of a disorder called Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder or FASD.

Introduce the video by saying something like **You are about to view a video that is emotional and has a powerful message.** You will hear from two mothers who have children with FASD. The intent is not to target anyone but to share with as many people the effects of alcohol because the information is important and can affect anyone.

Show the video *Don't Drink for Two: Prevent Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders.* After the video hand out the brochure- *Drinking and Pregnancy* **You may use the following points for a discussion.**

- **What did you think about the video?**
- **How did the video make you feel?**
- **If this happened to someone you know, how can you help them?**
- **What is an alcoholic drink?**

Beer, wine, wine coolers, liquor or mixed drinks are all alcoholic drinks.

A standard drink is like-
12-ounce can of beer
5 ounce glass of wine
1.5 ounce of liquor (in mixed drinks)

How much is safe?

There is no safe amount to drink or a safe stage of pregnancy.

What if someone drank before she knew that she was pregnant?

The sooner drinking is stopped during pregnancy, the better for the mother and the baby. If someone did drink before she found out she was pregnant, she should tell her doctor or counselor. It is important for all women to have regular prenatal checkups. **Remember, it is never too late to stop drinking.**

What would you say to someone who says “I drank in my last pregnancy and the baby is fine”?

Each pregnancy is different and alcohol may affect one baby more than another.

Can Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder be cured?

No, there is no cure for FASD. If help is received early the baby has a better chance in life.

How can Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder be prevented?

FASD is 100% preventable. It is prevented by not drinking during pregnancy. If a woman wants to get pregnant, she should stop drinking first. If a woman thinks she is pregnant she should stop drinking.

What help is available?

Refer participants to the brochure, *Drinking and your Pregnancy* published by National Institute of Health where several national hotlines are listed to get additional information and help.

There is help available to quit drinking. To get help to say “NO” to alcohol, call:

Your local WIC clinic:

You may also contact the following:

1-877-966-3784 – Texas Outreach, Screening and Referral

1-888 425 2666- Alcoholics Anonymous

1-888-554-2627- National Association for Children of Alcoholics

1-800-662-4357- Substance Abuse Treatment Facility Locator