



Health Nexus Weekly Bulletin

In this issue:

- COVID-19 and Alcohol and Substance Use.
- Preparations for the FASD Awareness Month.

COVID-19 AND ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE USE



Stress, boredom, and a lack of a regular schedule are all leading to an increase in the amount of alcohol consumption for Canadians during these unsettling times that surround the COVID-19 pandemic. It is noteworthy that younger Canadians (18-34) are more likely than those 55 years and older to report that their consumption of both alcohol and cannabis has increased ([Canadian Centre for Substance Use and Addictions, 2020](#)).

From Health Nexus' perspective, and for others working to reduce both the impact and the incidents of prenatal exposure to alcohol, one of the main reasons for concerns lies in the fact that before the pandemic, 50% of pregnancies have been unplanned, and the number of women in childbearing years drinking alcohol is on the rise. It is also important to note that 60% of women do not know that they are pregnant (early on in their pregnancies), which leaves many babies being unknowingly exposed to alcohol and other substances that can interfere with their normal development. Alcohol consumption can be affected by difficulties including unemployment, housing, food insecurity, mental health issues, and added stress such as the COVID-19 pandemic. In the child-bearing age group, this can lead to more pregnancies at risk of alcohol exposure.

To assist providers in supporting their clients, [CanFASD](#) has developed several excellent resources to help address the stressors and increased mental health issues that accompany COVID-19 circumstances.

There are many reasons why women drink, some are related to domestic violence, chronic mental health issues, and acute stress due to the isolation and difficult circumstances during the pandemic.

It is important to support neighbours, family, friends, and community members who cannot access social supports as readily as they had in the past. In order to respond to the pressing needs of vulnerable communities, Health Nexus and Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies developed a webinar on how to support high-risk families during COVID-19, which can be accessed here: <https://youtu.be/mhEcFALYDbM>

Providers can also visit <https://www.thinkfasd.ca/> for information about prevention and messaging. There are several videos and media messages that can be shared broadly.

Please access this website <https://www.thinkfasd.ca/media-gallery> for some excellent examples of powerful and positive messages that will respectfully help to increase awareness and decrease the number of alcohol-exposed pregnancies.

For Health Nexus resources and additional information, please visit: <https://www.fasinfotsaf.ca/en/>

For providers, who would like to learn more about how COVID-19 has impacted public health, please access this webinar series by Canadian Centre for Substance Use and

Addiction: <https://ccsa.ca/webinars?cldee=by5ib25kYXJAaGVhbHRobmV4dXMuY2E%3d&recipientid=contact-c9350db140d7ea11a813000d3af4a4ca-6586dc6cdf64baebf55746e3a0182de&esid=3310afc1-d5d1-ea11-a813-000d3af42c56>

Additional resources:

Centre for Excellence for Women's Health: Women, Alcohol and FASD Prevention.

<https://bccewh.bc.ca/featured-projects/women-alcohol-and-fasd-prevention/>

References:

Canadian Centre for Substance Use and Addictions (2020): *COVID-19 and Increased Alcohol Consumption: NANOS Poll Summary Report*.

<https://www.ccsa.ca/covid-19-and-increased-alcohol-consumption-nanos-poll-summary-report>

PREPARATIONS FOR THE FASD AWARENESS MONTH



FASD Awareness Month.

September is FASD Awareness Month and September 9, 2020, is the 20th Anniversary of INTERNATIONAL FASD DAY. Health Nexus FASD Family and Caregiver Support Group Project is going to do its part in helping to raise awareness of all the important work that is being done across the province in the area of family and caregiver support. We are also inviting communities to spread the word about how families can access their local FASD workers.

We are creating an INTERNATIONAL FASD DAY 2020 IN ONTARIO video montage for Health Nexus. We'd like the support group leaders and FASD workers/coordinators to be a part of it. Please visit [this page](#) to record or submit your message for Health Nexus before Monday, August 31, 2020, 10:30 AM EDT. We plan to share this video on our website and through social media to help others learn more about the benefit of, and where to get FASD support.

Please keep your video to 30 seconds, sharing your work (role) or an event/activity that is supporting people impacted by prenatal alcohol exposure/FASD.

We also invite you to send us your community's FASD events and on-line links to activities that are taking place on or around September 9, 2020, and throughout the month of September. We will be posting them on an upcoming new page of the [FASD Ontario Website](#) dedicated to FASD Day. They will be in a calendar format with a schedule so that local events can be accessed and celebrated across the province and beyond! Please send to Malou Gabert at m.gabert@healthnexus.ca.

[Click here to download the FASD Day Toolkit developed by CanFASD.](#)

Visit [our resources page](#) to discover all our many evidence-based, up-to-date resources!

best start
meilleur départ

by/par health **nexus** santé





We have moved! Our new location is:

Nous avons déménagé ! Notre nouvelle adresse :

WeWork

c/o Health Nexus

240 Richmond Street W

Toronto, ON M5V 1V6

Tel. (416) 408-2249

1-800-397-9567

Fax: (416) 408-2122

beststart@healthnexus.ca

[Unsubscribe from this list](#)