

Effects of Alcohol on the Unborn Child

The damage to a developing foetus resulting from the mother's alcohol intake is known as "Foetal Alcohol Syndrome " (FAS) or, where symptoms are less severe, as "Foetal alcohol Effects"(FAE).

A baby suffering from complete or partial FAS, will show some of these features:

Prenatal and Postnatal growth retardation

Evidence of central nervous system damage, including

- (a) Mental Retardation
- (b) Poor sucking and swallowing reflexes, apathy, eating problems
- (c) Poor muscle tone and motor coordination and
- (d) Irritability.

Craniofacial abnormalities including

- (a) Microcephaly or small head,
- (b) Flattened groove between the upper lip and nose,
- (c) Small, upturned nose,
- (d) Broad, low, nasal bridge,
- (e) Small, slant-like eyes set wide apart with heavily-folded eyelids,
- (f) Small jaw,
- (g) Cleft palate,
- (h) Protruding, often imperfect ears,
- (i) Eye problems,
- (j) Thicker than normal facial hair.

Skeletal abnormalities, including

- (a) Painful immobility of elbows and knees,
- (b) Small or abnormal fingernails and toenails,
- (c) Abnormal creases on the hands.

Defects in major organs, such as the Heart, Liver, Kidneys and Genitals