



Burntwood
Regional Health Authority
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Press Release

For Immediate Release:

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FASD Awareness Day to be marked on Sept. 9

Thompson, Manitoba - The Burntwood Regional Health Authority (BRHA) is holding an Awareness Walk on Wednesday, Sept. 9 starting at the Burntwood Community Health Resource Centre in the Thompson Plaza at 1:30 p.m. to bring the issue of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) to the forefront. Everyone is welcome to participate.

Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can seriously harm an unborn child. In Canada, more than 3,000 babies are born each year with FASD and an estimated 300,000 people are currently living with it. The tragic part about this statistic is that FASD is preventable if women avoid alcohol during pregnancy.

FASD describes the range of disabilities and diagnoses that result from drinking alcohol. The impact and effect of FASD vary and depend on how much alcohol was consumed, how often and when during the pregnancy. No amount or type of alcohol during pregnancy is considered safe.

Some of the health effects of FASD can include difficulty understanding the consequences of one's actions, depression, and skeletal abnormalities such as facial deformities. People live with FASD for their entire lives, so early intervention is key to minimizing the disabilities associated with it. Those affected may need life-long supports. There is no cure for FASD.

If you suspect a family member may have FASD, talk to your doctor about having a diagnosis completed. An early diagnosis can lead to interventions that can minimize the impact of FASD. Also a large number of pregnancies are unplanned. Therefore pregnant women may use alcohol and unknowingly cause damage. If you have sex and are not using birth control, avoid drinking alcohol.

If you are worried about your alcohol use, talk to your health care provider or call the Grassroots Mentoring Program at the BRHA at 677-5372. The Grassroots Mentoring Program is in place to help woman go through their pregnancy and early parenting in a healthy manner. A woman must be at least 18 years of age and live in Thompson. A woman can either be pregnant or gave birth within the past six months. She consumes alcohol and has few positive connections to the community.

Grassroots Mentoring provides information, education, support and advocacy. Participation is voluntary and confidential. Clients are matched with mentors that meet with them regularly and assist with linking them to community services. A friend or family member can accompany a participant during mentoring sessions to give further support. The Grassroots Mentoring Program is a provincial STOP FASD program through Healthy Child Manitoba.