



PRESS RELEASE

On occasion of International Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Day

The National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (NOFAS),
on behalf of the main partners of the campaign Too Young To Drink
presents

TOO YOUNG TO DRINK 2016 the international communication campaign to raise awareness of the risks of prenatal exposure to alcohol.

Today, September 9, the 9th day of the 9th month, at 9:09am, on the occasion of the **International Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Day**, we welcome the third edition of [Too Young To Drink](#), the international communication campaign to raise awareness of the risks of prenatal exposure to alcohol.

The campaign is conceived by **Fabrica**, the Benetton group's communication research center, to raise awareness of the risks of **FASD** (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders), a range of problems caused by prenatal exposure to alcohol. Alcohol use during pregnancy, even within the first few weeks and before a woman knows she is pregnant, can cause physical, behavioral, and intellectual disabilities that can last for a person's lifetime.

In the United States, according to the CDC, an estimated 3.3 million women between the ages of 15 and 44 years are at risk of exposing their developing baby to alcohol because they are drinking, sexually active, and not using birth control to prevent pregnancy. The CDC also reported that 3 in 4 women who want to get pregnant as soon as possible do not stop drinking alcohol when they stop using birth control. Studies in the U.S. have shown that about 1% of children are affected by FASD, studies in Europe show at least 2%, and even higher numbers in some areas, for example in South Africa. **However, FASD is 100% preventable - by avoiding alcohol during pregnancy.**

The **major aims** of the *Too Young To Drink* campaign are the following:

- To raise awareness of the dangers of drinking during pregnancy among the child-bearing aged population and in the community;
- To spread accurate, research-based information on the risks of using alcohol during pregnancy;
- To empower women to make their own choices, and encourage friends, families and the society to support alcohol-free pregnancies.



The network of partner organizations created for the edition 2014, has now reached 80 organizations in 35 countries around the world, working together to raise awareness of FASD internationally.

Starting from today, 9:09, local time, institutions, organizations and individuals joining the campaign, as part of their local awareness-raising actions, will display, show and use the visuals of the campaign (the image of a baby in the ingredients of an alcoholic cocktail, or a child in the bottle of an alcoholic beverage), to give continuity to previous years and to affirm that it is possible to give an international joint message.

Photos and videos that will be published and disseminated in social media using the hashtag #TYTD2016, #FASD #FASDmonth, #FASDay.

The campaign actions will continue for all the month of September, to sustain the FASD awareness month (#FASDmonth).

“The National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (NOFAS) and its affiliates across the United States have worked very hard for twenty-five years to bring FASD to the forefront of the American public. Everyone wants to think that FASD is something that affects other people”, said **Kathleen Mitchell**, Vice President and Spokesperson of NOFAS and birth mother of a child with fetal alcohol syndrome. With 40,000 babies born each year in the U.S. alone with FASD, it is critical that we as a society work together to combat what amounts to roughly one out of every 100 babies having preventable birth defects.”

“As the adoptive mother of three children with FASD, I see the daily struggles they face in school and in their social relations. I am working to prevent this ever happening to another child”, says **Diane Black**, Chair of the European FASD Alliance.

“FASD is an international problem and requires an international solution. So far, France is the only European country that provides a warning message on all alcoholic beverages. The European Commission is perfectly positioned to take action and support Member States in raising awareness about this problem. We hope the new Commissioner for Health will move the issue quickly forward”, says **Mariann Skar**, Secretary General European Alcohol Policy Alliance.

The campaign has the support of Local Health Authority of Treviso (Veneto Region, Italy), which offered consultancy for the social marketing strategy and evaluation, basing on the experience of the project “Mamma Beve Bimbo Beve.”

For further information: www.tooyoungtodrink.org