

Background

Prenatal exposure to alcohol can result in a wide range of life long problems and is linked to permanent brain damage, low birth weight, birth defects and developmental delays. Best Start: Ontario's Maternal, Newborn and Early Child Development Resource Centre is committed to helping reduce the use of alcohol during pregnancy, by focusing on prevention. In collaboration with its partners, Best Start is launching a provincial public awareness and education campaign on alcohol use and pregnancy which will rollout across Ontario in May and June 2004.

The campaign has been developed with input from an Advisory Committee, which includes representatives from FASworld; FAS/FAE Information Service, CCSA; Motherisk; Health Canada; Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres; Ontario Prevention Clearinghouse; Best Start; and Ontario Ministry of Health – Public Health Branch.

About the Campaign

The aim of the Alcohol and Pregnancy Awareness Campaign is to increase awareness about the benefits of not drinking alcohol during pregnancy and to encourage health care providers to recommend that women stop drinking alcohol prior to and during pregnancy.

The campaign includes advertising in buses, subways, movie theatres and shopping malls, publicity on radio, television and in newspapers and a website www.alcoholfreepregnancy.ca. Best Start has developed campaign resources which will be distributed through community groups, health care providers and through the LCBO retail stores.

About Best Start

Best Start: Ontario's Maternal, Newborn and Early Child Development Resource Centre supports service providers across the province of Ontario working on health promotion initiatives to enhance the health of expectant and new parents, newborns and young children.

The Best Start Resource Centre provides consultation, training, information and resources. It works to share effective practices and research on maternal and newborn health promotion through its newsletter and website. The Resource Centre produces unique maternal, newborn and child health resources, including posters, brochures, manuals and an e-bulletin to help service providers with both program planning and program delivery.

Best Start is a key program of the Ontario Prevention Clearinghouse (OPC) and is funded by the Government of Ontario. It is also a member of the Ontario Health Promotion Resource System - a group of organizations sharing common goals, resources and expertise.

The Alcohol and Pregnancy Provincial Awareness Campaign is funded by the Ontario government.