

**A Collaborative project of:**

**Best Start: Ontario's Maternal, Newborn and  
Early Child Development Resource Centre**

**Motherisk**

**Centre for Addiction and Mental Health**

**City of Hamilton Social and Public Health Services**

**Health Canada Population and Public Health Branch, Ontario Region**

**Breaking The Cycle**

**FASworld Canada**

**AWARE**

**FOCUS Resource Centre**

**Equay wuk**

**and concerned physicians**

**2002**



## Planning Guide

# Training Local Physicians on Alcohol Use and Pregnancy

**Acknowledgements:**

The content for the series of physician training materials  
on alcohol use and pregnancy was developed in partnership with:

- Motherisk • Centre for Addiction and Mental Health • City of Hamilton Social and Public Health Services • Health Canada, Population and Public Health Branch, Ontario Region
- Breaking the Cycle • FASworld Canada • AWARE • FOCUS Resource Centre
- Equay wuk • and concerned physicians



**Best Start: Ontario's Maternal,  
Newborn and  
Early Child Development  
Resource Centre  
c/o OPC  
180 Dundas Street West, Suite 1900  
Toronto, ON, M5G 1Z8  
Phone: 1-416-408-2249 or  
1-800-397-9567  
Fax: 1-416-408-2122  
Email: [beststart@beststart.org](mailto:beststart@beststart.org)  
[www.beststart.org](http://www.beststart.org)**

This document has been prepared with funds provided by Ontario Early Years. Best Start: Ontario's Maternal, Newborn and Early Child Development Resource Centre is a key program of the Ontario Prevention Clearinghouse (OPC) and is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. The information herein reflects the views of the authors and is not officially endorsed by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care or the Ontario Early Years.

## Introduction:

In collaboration with our partners, Best Start developed a training program for physicians on alcohol use and pregnancy. “Supporting Change” focuses on primary prevention (asking, advising and assisting women around alcohol use and pregnancy). This training will help physicians to identify women who use alcohol and to provide appropriate care prior to and during pregnancy.

Prenatal exposure to alcohol can result in a wide range of life long problems and is linked to distinct facial features, brain damage, low birth weight and birth defects. Physicians can prevent or decrease prenatal exposure to alcohol by providing appropriate information and supports, prior to or during pregnancy. The “Supporting Change” training materials were developed to help local communities to implement effective training for physicians on preventing and addressing alcohol use in pregnancy.

This planning guide will help you plan your physician training event and describes some of the steps involved in setting up physician training on alcohol use and pregnancy. This resource provides background information on:

- Physician knowledge and practices
- Involving physicians
- Topics of interest
- Effective clinical practices
- Budgeting for your event
- Continuing medical education credits
- Choosing a speaker
- Displays and resources
- Evaluation of your event

To help you implement a physician training event in your community, Best Start can also provide you with the following elements:

- Lists of trained facilitators who can deliver local training
- Training materials including facilitator binder and participant handbook
- Physician desk references
- Patient resources such as posters and handouts
- Display materials

If you have any questions or need more detailed information, please feel free to contact Best Start (see Appendix 2).



## 1. Who can impact on alcohol use in pregnancy?

Since most women visit a physician during pregnancy, physicians have the opportunity to ask about alcohol use and to provide appropriate counselling, care and referral. Physicians are seen as a credible source of information by the general public. Most people say they would make health changes if recommended by a doctor.



Early pregnancy is a particularly sensitive period for alcohol use. Physicians who care for women before pregnancy and early in pregnancy have an important role in assessing women's alcohol use and in providing timely advice, counselling and referral.

It is especially important to provide training to family physicians because they care for:

- Women who may become pregnant
- Women who are planning a pregnancy
- Women who are confirming a pregnancy
- Women who are pregnant

Information on alcohol use and pregnancy is also beneficial to a wide range of other health care providers. Other health care providers who could also benefit from brief or in depth training on alcohol and pregnancy include:

- Physicians who provide obstetrical care
- Midwives
- Pediatricians
- Clinical nurses and nurse practitioners
- Office staff
- Prenatal class instructors

## 2. What do physicians know about alcohol and pregnancy?

The general public is increasingly aware of the damage caused by alcohol use in pregnancy, however there are still some areas where awareness is lacking. While most Canadians now realize that alcohol use in pregnancy can lead to life long problems, some populations are relatively unaware of the risks. There is also confusion about safe limits for alcohol use and when to stop drinking.

While some physicians are very knowledgeable about alcohol use during pregnancy, others:

- Do not ask about alcohol use
- Provide inaccurate advice on issues such as safe drinking levels during pregnancy

Physicians may be:

- Uncomfortable asking about alcohol use prior to and during pregnancy
- Uninformed on the issue of alcohol use in pregnancy
- Unsure how to ask women about alcohol use in pregnancy
- Unsure how to advise women
- Unaware of effective screening tools
- Unaware of services for women who are having difficulty changing drinking behaviour



When planning a local training event for physicians, it is helpful to ask physicians about their beliefs, barriers and practices related to alcohol use during pregnancy. A brief survey distributed at rounds, by fax or mail can give you a better idea of the knowledge and practices of local physicians. Consider talking to key informants, such as chiefs of staff, about local issues related to clinical practices around alcohol use and pregnancy. Sample survey questions can be found in Appendix 1. This information will be critical in promoting your event and adapting the training to the needs of your local physicians.

### 3. How do I increase interest in the training?

It is important to assess physician interest before you invest time and money in planning a training event. Physicians, particularly those working with pregnant women, can have long unpredictable hours. Alcohol use in pregnancy is only one of many important topics that physicians must address. Respect the fact that physicians are busy people. There are many groups trying to access physicians' time, and a significant amount of paper crosses their desks. In order for training on alcohol use in pregnancy to be successful, physicians must consider it a priority and must be involved in planning the event.

Physicians may have low interest levels because:

- They have other priorities
- They lack knowledge on the topic
- They have a very busy practice
- It is a busy time of year

Talk to a few key physicians to determine interest in a training event. If interest levels are insufficient, try not to feel discouraged. Take some time to raise the local profile of the issue by:

- Encouraging a concerned physician to talk informally with other physicians
- Interviewing a concerned physician on television or radio
- Including information on alcohol and pregnancy in newspapers or newsletters
- Providing physicians with brief information on the relevance and incidence of alcohol use in pregnancy and ensuing problems
- Providing physicians with any new information on alcohol use in pregnancy, including clinical practice guidelines
- Making sure that physicians have up-to-date patient resources such as posters or brochures
- Providing training to other health professionals

It takes time to form a good working relationship and to raise awareness and interest. If the interest levels are low, keep the lines of communication open and ask if there are other approaches that might be helpful. Re-assess interest in training at a later date.

If physicians are interested in training on alcohol use in pregnancy, there are many ways to increase participation in your event. If Continuing Medical Education credits are provided, physicians are more likely to see the event as relevant and valuable (for more information on CME credits, see section 7). A well-known speaker or one with a specialization on the topic will also increase the credibility of your event.

Think about how you can make it easier for physicians to attend, in spite of their demanding practice. Physicians have few breaks in the day and it may be easier for them to attend an event scheduled for breakfast or lunch, especially if food is provided. Ask physicians for their input on timing, location, content and the speaker. Ask what would interest them most and what would make it easier for them to be involved.

For more insights on working with physicians, see the Best Start resource “How to Build Partnerships with Physicians” (see Appendix 2).

#### 4. What topics should be included in the training?

The Supporting Change facilitator binder is designed to be as flexible and adaptable as possible. It includes a wide range of information on addressing alcohol use in pregnancy that can be tailored to the interests of participants and the time available for your session. Physicians are particularly interested in evidence-based information, and how it can be applied to clinical practice.

We recommend including the following topics in physician training on alcohol use and pregnancy:

- Role of the physician
- Women and alcohol use
- Clients requiring specialized approaches
- How to ask about alcohol use
- Responding to disclosure of alcohol use
- Common questions
- Related resources and services

The information provided in the facilitators binder will help physicians assess and respond to alcohol use in pregnancy. We can't stress enough how important it is to ask physicians for their input on training content. They may be more interested in some areas than others, or may be interested in additional topic areas such as tobacco use, other drug use, or alcohol use and breastfeeding.



## 5. What are the clinical practices related to alcohol and pregnancy?

The training you provide can help physicians to adopt sensitive and effective clinical practices related to alcohol use and pregnancy. While some women may be able to stop drinking based on information alone, others will need comprehensive supports.

Women have different needs depending on their drinking levels and whether they:

- Are not planning a pregnancy
- Are planning a pregnancy
- Are pregnant

Here are some of the key clinical practices that physicians can apply:

### **ASK**

- ask all women of childbearing age about alcohol use
- ask all pregnant women about alcohol use

### **ADVISE**

- advise all women planning a pregnancy that no alcohol is the safest choice
- advise all pregnant women that no alcohol is the safest choice
- advise women who consumed alcohol during their pregnancy to contact Motherisk

### **ASSIST**

- assist women to stop drinking through counselling, care and referral to appropriate programs and services



## 6. How can I fund the event?

Physician training events can be expensive. Some of the possible expenses are:

- Honorarium for facilitator
- Travel expenses for facilitator
- Catering the event
- Room rental
- Promotion
- Sample resources for participants

If your budget is small, consider ways to reduce or eliminate the costs. For example, you can ask a venue to donate space, and there are many ways to minimize promotion costs. There may be groups or organizations in your community that would like to contribute to an event that promotes healthy child development. Partner with other groups and services that are concerned about prenatal exposure to alcohol. Local physician organizations may be able to contribute to the costs, provide catering or a location for the training event.

There are funding agencies that may support your efforts such as:

- Trillium Foundation, [www.trilliumfoundation.org](http://www.trilliumfoundation.org)
- Early Years Challenge Fund, [www.childsec.gov.on.ca](http://www.childsec.gov.on.ca)
- National Crime Prevention Centre, [www.crime-prevention.org](http://www.crime-prevention.org)



## 7. How can I access Continuing Medical Education (CME) credits for family physicians?

It is helpful to have some background information on Continuing Medical Education (CME). This section provides a brief outline of CME. Detailed information on accreditation is available through the College of Family Physicians of Canada or the Ontario College of Family Physicians (see Appendix 2).

Although it takes time and careful planning to get CME credits for a physician training event, there are many benefits. The process of accreditation can improve the quality of the session, plus help tailor the content and approaches to the needs and interests of the participating physicians. Accreditation can increase the credibility of an event and may result in higher attendance.

Family physicians need CME credits to maintain their standing with the College of Family Physicians. MAINPRO (Maintenance of Proficiency) is a structured CME credit system including three main types of CME credits:

- MAINPRO-M1 - accredited activities such as seminars, lectures or workshops
- MAINPRO-M2 - unaccredited activities such as teaching, research, presentations or review of medical journals
- MAINPRO-C - accredited events that address practice-linked reflective learning

Bear in mind the following criteria when planning accredited events for physicians:

### MAINPRO-M1

- Content must be relevant to family medicine
- At least one family physician must assist in planning and development
- The event must demonstrate high educational, ethical and medical standards
- Participant needs should be determined prior to the event through a survey, interviews with a representative sample of participants or through feedback from a similar event
- Learning objectives must be clearly defined and provided to participants prior to the event
- Speakers should be briefed on the learning objectives and expectations
- Participants must have an opportunity to evaluate the program

### MAINPRO-C

Must meet all criteria for MAINPRO-M1 plus:

- Programs must be developed and implemented by, or in partnership with a university office of CME, a university department of family medicine, or a chapter of the College of Family Physicians of Canada

- Learning objectives must be based on an accurate participant needs assessment
- Most of the activity must be in small groups
- The session must be self-directed, evidence-based and reflective
- The session must conclude with an activity that encourages the participants to reflect on what they learned
- Participant knowledge and performance is evaluated

To apply for accreditation for an event, the following requirements must be met:

- Complete the accreditation application and submit it to the Ontario College of Family Physicians for MAINPRO-M1 and the College of Family Physicians of Canada for MAINPRO-C (see contact information in Appendix 2). Blank forms are available from either organization. The application form must be accompanied by information on content, duration, speaker, learning objectives and sources of funding. For MAINPRO-C you will also need to submit a description of the needs assessment, format, and post course reflective activity.
- Applications must be submitted at least 8 weeks prior to the training event for MAINPRO-M1 and 3 months prior for MAINPRO-C
- A non-refundable fee of \$150 for MAINPRO-M1 and \$250 for MAINPRO-C must be submitted with the application form

When planning for your event:

- Do not refer to accreditation in written materials prior to notification of approval
- Prepare letters or certificates indicating attendance (see Appendix 3)

Detailed information on applying for CME credits is available on the College of Family Physicians of Canada website. MAINPRO Accreditation Application Forms are available from the College of Family Physicians of Canada or the Ontario College of Family Physicians (see Appendix 2).

## 8. Where can I find a credible and interesting facilitator?

Physicians usually want to hear from another physician, particularly one with experience or a specialization in alcohol use and pregnancy. Best Start maintains a list of physicians who are trained to facilitate training on alcohol use and pregnancy. Best Start can provide you with contact information for trained presenters. You may also want to contact other organizations such as Motherisk, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health or the FAS/FAE Information Service at the Canadian Centre for Substance Abuse for other physicians who present on alcohol use in pregnancy. Contact information for these organizations is provided in Appendix 2.

## 9. What if I want to set up displays at the training event?

Displays can help link physicians to important resources and local services. Ask local organizations to set up a display.

Consider the following:

- Treatment centres
- Drug and alcohol counselling services
- Services that assist individuals affected by alcohol use and pregnancy
- Pregnancy support programs
- Support groups for families affected by alcohol use in pregnancy

You may also want to set up your own display to distribute sample patient resources such as brochures and posters. You can develop a display by using computer generated text and images or through creative use of posters. Another option is to borrow Best Start's 3 foot by 6 foot display on alcohol and pregnancy. It attaches by velcro to most standard three panel display boards. The display is light weight and rolls into a tube for transportation. Best Start also loans out infant models that show many of the typical features of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS). There is no cost for borrowing the display and FAS model. For more information on reserving a display or FAS model, contact Best Start (see Appendix 2). Display below available from Best Start:



**My family wanted me to be as healthy as possible.**

**My mother decided not to drink any alcohol while she was pregnant.**

- Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can cause birth defects and brain damage.
- Plan ahead and stop drinking before you get pregnant.
- If you are pregnant, you can help your baby by stopping drinking.

**Choose an alcohol-free pregnancy**

**Help is available if you need it.**



BEST START:  
Maternal, Newborn & Early Child Development Resource Centre.

## 10. Are there resources for physicians on alcohol and pregnancy?

There are several resources that can help you implement your training event. Each trained facilitator has a copy of the Supporting Change facilitator binder which includes overheads, speaker notes and relevant research articles. You may want to order the following key resources from Best Start for each of the participants:

- Supporting Change participant handbook
- Desk reference on alcohol use screening tools
- Desk reference on alcohol and breastfeeding

You may also want to develop packages of information for the participants including:

- Sample posters
- Sample patient brochures
- Fact sheets
- Motherisk Pregnancy Wallet Card
- Motherisk Alcohol and Substance Use Helpline Brochure
- Motherisk Alcohol and Substance Use Helpline Poster
- Lists of local services

These resources could come from a variety of sources. The FAS/FAE Information Service is a good place to contact if you are interested in a range of resources and information on alcohol use and pregnancy (see Appendix 2). A list of sample resources can be found in Appendix 2.

Physicians may be unaware of local services such as counselling, crisis centres and support programs for pregnant women.

You can help physicians improve referrals by:

- Developing lists of local services, either in booklet or tear off sheet formats
- Arranging for brief presentations at grand rounds
- Including information in newsletters
- Putting up displays at physician events



## 11. How can I evaluate the session?

Physicians should be provided with the opportunity to comment on the training event. Distribute brief evaluation forms after the training event. Keep in mind that learning is an on-going life long process. Physicians may be interested in additional training at a later date, or may require specific resources in order to implement clinical practice. Ask what else would be helpful and follow up in a supportive manner, when possible. Sample evaluation questions can be found in Appendix 4.



## 12. Checklist for planning your training event:

- **Step 1** - Ask if physicians are interested in training on alcohol and pregnancy
- **Step 2** - Involve physicians in planning the training event
- **Step 3** - Determine areas of interest for participants
- **Step 4** - Determine how you will fund your event
- **Step 5** - Access CME accreditation
- **Step 6** - Select and invite a facilitator
- **Step 7** - Find a location for your event
- **Step 8** - Plan for meals and/or coffee breaks
- **Step 9** - Promote the event
- **Step 10** - Host the event
- **Step 11** - Evaluate the event
- **Step 12** - Consider how else you can address alcohol use and pregnancy

## Appendix 1 - Sample Physician Survey Questions

1. I know about the risks of alcohol use among pregnant women.  
Yes  No  Not Sure
2. I believe that women who are planning to get pregnant should abstain completely from alcohol.  
Yes  No  Not Sure
3. I believe that pregnant women should abstain completely from alcohol.  
Yes  No  Not Sure
4. I believe that pregnant women should be screened for alcohol use.  
Yes  No  Not Sure
5. I am comfortable with asking women about their personal alcohol use.  
Yes  No  Not Sure
6. I am confident in my ability to provide brief counselling to women with alcohol problems.  
Yes  No  Not Sure
7. I am knowledgeable about the services available in my community to which I can refer patients.  
Yes  No  Not Sure
8. What screening tools do you use when screening a woman for alcohol use?  
Frequency / Quantity  TWEAK  CAGE  T-ACE
9. Are you interested in training on alcohol use and pregnancy?  
Yes  No  Not Sure

10. What topics would help you address alcohol use in pregnancy:

Role of the physician

Women and alcohol use

Clients requiring specialized approaches

How to ask about alcohol use

Responding to disclosure of alcohol use

Related resources and services

Other:.....  
.....  
.....

11. How can we make it easier for you to attend the training?

Time of Day: .....

Location: .....

Other: .....

12. What else would help you address alcohol use and pregnancy?

Posters

Chart Reminder System

Brochures

Desk Reference

Tear Off Information Sheets

Community Resource Directories

Other: .....



## Appendix 2 - Resources & Services

### Organization

#### Alberta Clinical Practice Guidelines Program

12230-106 Avenue NW  
Edmonton, AB, T5N 3Z1  
Phone: 1-780-482-2626  
Fax: 1-780-482-5445  
Email: ama\_cpg@amda.ab.ca

#### Best Start: Ontario's Maternal, Newborn and Early Child Development Resource Centre

c/o OPC  
180 Dundas Street West, Suite 1900  
Toronto, ON, M5G 1Z8  
Phone: 1-416-408-2249 or 1-800-397-9567  
Fax: 1-416-408-2122  
Email: beststart@beststart.org  
www.beststart.org

#### Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

33 Russell Street  
Toronto, ON, M5S 2S1  
Phone: 1-416-535-8501 x6982  
Fax: 1-416-595-6601  
Email: library@camh.net  
www.camh.net

#### College of Family Physicians of Canada

2630 Skymark Ave  
Mississauga, ON, L4W 5A4  
Tel: 1-905-629-0900  
Fax: 1-905-629-0893  
www.cfpc.ca

### Resources and Services

- Preface to the Prevention and Diagnosis of FAS
- Recommendations: Prevention of FAS
- Guideline for the Diagnosis of FAS
  
- Alcohol and Pregnancy Display
- FAS Model
- Alcohol and Pregnancy Posters
- Supporting Change Facilitator Binder: Alcohol & Pregnancy
- Supporting Change Participant Handbook: Alcohol & Pregnancy
- Alcohol Screening Desk Reference
- Alcohol and Breastfeeding Desk Reference
- How to Build Partnerships with Physicians
- Alcohol and Pregnancy Fact Sheet
  
- Reference Library on Alcohol & Pregnancy
  
- MAINPRO Accreditation Application Forms

## Organization

### FAS/FAE Information Service

Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse  
75 Albert Street, Suite 300  
Ottawa, ON, K1P 5E7  
Phone: 1-613-235-4048 x223 or 1-800-559-4514  
Fax: 1-613-235-8101  
Email: [fas@ccsa.ca](mailto:fas@ccsa.ca)  
[www.ccsa.ca/fasgen.htm](http://www.ccsa.ca/fasgen.htm)

### Health Canada Publications

Ottawa, ON, K1A 0K9  
Phone: 1-613-954-5995  
Fax: 1-613-941-5366  
[www.fas-saf.com](http://www.fas-saf.com)

### Manitoba Text Book Bureau

Box 910  
Souris, MB, R0K 2C0  
Phone: 1-204-483-4040  
Fax: 1-204-483-3441  
Email: [mtbb@merlin.mb.ca](mailto:mtbb@merlin.mb.ca)  
[www.edu.gov.mb.ca](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca)

### Motherisk

The Hospital for Sick Children  
555 University Ave  
Toronto, ON, M5G 1X8  
Phone: 1-877-327-4636  
Fax: 1-416-813-7562  
[www.motherisk.org](http://www.motherisk.org)

## Resources and Services

- Reference Library on FAS/FAE
- Directory of FAS/FAE Information and Support Services in Canada
- Pregnant? No Alcohol Poster
- Pregnant? No Alcohol Pamphlet
- Joint Statement: Prevention of FAS & FAE in Canada
- What Doctors Need to Know about FAS – CD or cassette
- Physician Training
- Alcohol and Substance Use Helpline Poster
- Alcohol and Substance Use Helpline Pamphlets
- Alcohol and Substance Use in Pregnancy Help Line (1-877-327-4636)
- Pregnancy Wallet Card
- FAS/ARND Assessment

## Organization

### **National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism**

Publication Distribution Centre

Box 10686

Rockville, MD 20849-0686

[www.niaaa.nih.gov](http://www.niaaa.nih.gov)

### **Ontario College of Family Physicians**

357 Bay Street, Suite 800

Toronto, ON, M5H 2T7

Tel: 1-416-867-9646

Fax: 1-416-867-9990

[www.cfpc.ca/ocfp](http://www.cfpc.ca/ocfp)

## Resources and Services

- Identification of At-Risk Drinking and Intervention with Women of Childbearing Age
- Identification and Care of Fetal Alcohol-Exposed Children
  
- MAINPRO Accreditation Application Forms



**Appendix 3 - Sample Certificate of Participation**

# Certificate of Attendance:

## Supporting Change: Preventing and Addressing Alcohol Use in Pregnancy

This is to certify that.....has participated in this program  
and is eligible for.....hours of.....study credit from.....

Date:..... Location:.....

.....  
Signature

Supporting Change is a program of Best Start: Ontario's Maternal, Newborn and Early Child Development Resource Centre



## Appendix 4 - Sample Evaluation Questions

1. The program was relevant to family medicine  
Strongly Disagree       Disagree       Neutral       Agree       Strongly Agree
2. The program met the stated objectives  
Strongly Disagree       Disagree       Neutral       Agree       Strongly Agree
3. The program met my expectations  
Strongly Disagree       Disagree       Neutral       Agree       Strongly Agree
4. The program met my learning objectives  
Strongly Disagree       Disagree       Neutral       Agree       Strongly Agree
5. I was able to interact with the other participants  
Strongly Disagree       Disagree       Neutral       Agree       Strongly Agree
6. The program was credible and non-biased  
Strongly Disagree       Disagree       Neutral       Agree       Strongly Agree
7. The program was well organised  
Strongly Disagree       Disagree       Neutral       Agree       Strongly Agree
8. There was adequate time  
Strongly Disagree       Disagree       Neutral       Agree       Strongly Agree
9. The speaker presented the information clearly  
Strongly Disagree       Disagree       Neutral       Agree       Strongly Agree
10. The speaker provided adequate discussion time  
Strongly Disagree       Disagree       Neutral       Agree       Strongly Agree

**11.** Other comments and suggestions on the program:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**12.** How will you change your practice as a result of this program?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**13.** How can we help you address alcohol use in pregnancy?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**14.** Are there any other topics that you would like training on?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....