

where to get diagnosed

If you or someone you know suspects prenatal alcohol exposure, it is important to act early, reach out and pursue an in-depth evaluation of your child. In Minnesota, you do not need a referral from primary care to make an appointment at an FASD Diagnostic Clinic, but be sure to verify coverage through your health insurance carrier.

For a clinic close to home, search the MOFAS online Resource Directory. Go to www.mofas.org and click on MOFAS Resources.

what to do with the results

Remember, getting an FASD diagnosis is not about “labeling” a child. It is rather an opportunity for your child and family to get the services and support needed to be successful.

1. Share the diagnosis with your child’s school to assist with the development of an Individualized Education Plan.
2. Share this information with your child’s doctor to receive more appropriate medical and mental health services.
3. Contact your county social service office to see what supports and services are available.

how to contact us

mail:

Minnesota Organization
on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
2233 University Avenue West, Suite 395
Saint Paul, MN 55114

phone:

metro: 651-917-2370
toll free: 1-866-90-MOFAS (66327)
fax: 651-917-2405

online:

mofas.org
info@mofas.org
facebook.com/mofas.org



FASD screening and diagnosis

educational information from
the minnesota organization
on fetal alcohol syndrome

what is Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD)?

FASD is an umbrella term describing a range of conditions and disabilities that can occur in an individual whose mother drank alcohol during pregnancy. FASD cannot be cured and the damage to the brain is permanent.

what to watch for

Only trained professionals can make a diagnosis. FASD is often misdiagnosed because many of the characteristics look the same as mental health disorders.

Signs to look for that may indicate the need for an FASD assessment include:

- Sleeping and sucking problems as a baby
- Hearing or vision problems
- Difficulty in school; especially in math
- Poor coordination and fine motor skills
- Sensitivity to light, touch, sound
- Hyperactive behavior
- Difficulty paying attention
- Poor memory
- Poor reasoning and judgment skills

why is diagnosis important?

Screening for prenatal alcohol exposure and a possible FASD diagnosis can help you and your child get the services and support needed to be successful. It can provide greater understanding and acceptance. It can lead to more realistic expectations and contribute to positive long-term outcomes.

prep for your appointment

When you contact the diagnostic clinic to schedule an evaluation, the clinic will send you a packet of paperwork that must be completed before your appointment can be scheduled.

These materials will include:

- Release of information forms for health, school and social service records
- Checklists for teachers and caregivers to fill out
- Social history information

It is helpful to record your child's history and behavior, and make copies of any written reports. See the enclosed checklist for more information to bring to your doctor visits.

the diagnostic process

Unfortunately, there is not one medical test (like a blood test) to confirm a diagnosis under the FASD umbrella. Instead, here in MN, FASD is diagnosed by a team of professionals assessing four specific areas:

- Growth issues
- Brain function and structure
- Facial features
- Prenatal alcohol history

Depending on the clinic, the diagnostic process can take 3-6 hours and includes:

- 1. History (Clinic Care Coordinator)**
A comprehensive history of the problem and any evidence of prenatal alcohol exposure is discussed.
- 2. Physical Exam (Medical Provider)**
Measurements of the head, face and growth are taken along with a complete physical exam.
- 3. Neurodevelopmental Assessment (Psychologist, Speech Therapist and Occupational Therapist)**
Comprehensive testing is done to evaluate 10 different brain functions including memory, executive functioning and motor skills.
- 4. Diagnosis (Diagnostic Team)**
All assessments are reviewed by the diagnostic team and evaluated to see if they meet the criteria for a diagnosis under the FASD umbrella.
- 5. Evaluation Report (Diagnostic Team)**
A summary of the findings is prepared along with any specific recommendations for follow up support and treatment. Information about MOFAS and upcoming Hand in Hand Series are distributed.