

Consider dangers of using drugs during pregnancy

May 12-18 is National Alcohol and Other Drug Related Birth Defects Week, so this is a good time to consider the seriousness of using alcohol or drugs during pregnancy. The National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence Inc. has provided information on the effects of drug and alcohol on infants.

One of the most common alcohol and drug related birth defects is Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, and it is the leading cause of mental retardation. It is caused by maternal alcoholism or heavy drinking during pregnancy.

Features of the syndrome include growth deficiency before and after birth; effects on the central nervous system, such as intellectual impairment, developmental delays and behavioral problems; and changes in facial features, such as a flattened midface, a small jaw and a thin upper lip.

Fetal alcohol effects is used to describe individuals exposed to alcohol in the womb who exhibit only some of the attributes of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome but do not fulfill the diagnostic criteria for the syndrome.

Children with the syndrome commonly have problems with learning, attention, memory and problem solving, along with incoordination, impulsiveness and speech and hearing impairments.



cris lovington

• prevention center

Although many of the physical characteristics associated with the syndrome become less prominent after puberty, intellectual problems endure, and behavioral, emotional and social problems become more pronounced.

Alcohol and or drug use during pregnancy crosses all sectors of society without regard to age, race, ethnicity etc. However, it may be more or less prevalent within certain groups.

Overall, rates of use during pregnancy of marijuana, cocaine, and cigarettes often were significantly higher for women who were not married, currently not employed, had less than 16 years of formal education, or relied on public aid for payment of the hospital.

This pattern was reversed for alcohol use, with significantly higher rates found in women who were currently employed, had completed college, or had private insurance.

Each year 4,000 to 12,000 babies are born with the physical signs and intellectual disabilities associated with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, and

prevalence of the syndrome vary from 0.2 to 1.0 per 1,000 live births.

Making a diagnosis of the syndrome or alcohol effects at birth is difficult because facial characteristics are difficult to discern and some features such as behavioral and cognitive functioning problems are not observable at birth.

As a result, data on the syndrome's incidence based on use of medical records and registry of birth defects are low.

Estimates show 40,000 to 75,000 drug-exposed babies (1 to 2 percent of live births) to 375,000 (11 percent) are born each year. These numbers reflect maternal use of illicit drugs only and would be much larger if alcohol and nicotine were included.

Research has found that when screening and testing for drug use is uniformly applied among pregnant women, a much higher incidence of drug-exposed infants are identified.

The average incidence of drug-exposed infants born at hospitals with rigorous detection procedures

was close to 16 percent of those hospitals' births compared to 3 percent at hospitals with no substance abuse assessment.

Over 75 percent of all perinatally-acquired HIV infections are secondary to intravenous drug use by an infected mother or her sexual partner. The extent of damage caused by prenatal alcohol exposure depends on the stage of fetal development, biological and environmental variables and the amount and timing of the mother's alcohol consumption

Once a woman bears a child with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, the probability that subsequent children will have the syndrome is 70 percent. Pregnant women consuming between one and two drinks per day are twice as likely as nondrinkers to have a growth-retarded infant weighing less than 5.5 pounds.

Newborns whose mothers drink heavily (an average of five drinks per day, especially during the last three months of pregnancy) may show signs of alcohol withdrawal such as tremors, sleeping problems, inconsolable crying and abnormal reflexes.

Cigarette smoking during pregnancy has long been associated with adverse outcomes, including low birth weight, preterm birth, and intrauterine growth retardation and with infant morbidity and mortality (including sudden in-

fant death syndrome).

Increased tremulousness, altered visual response patterns to a light stimulus, and some withdrawal-like crying have been noted in the newborn infants of women who smoked marijuana heavily while pregnant.

Cocaine use can precipitate miscarriage or premature delivery because it raises blood pressure and increases contractions of the uterus. Babies born to cocaine-using mothers appear to have fewer clearly discernible withdrawal symptoms than babies exposed to heroin and other narcotics in the womb.

Although cocaine-exposed newborns tend to be jittery, to cry shrilly, and to startle at even the slightest stimulation, these effects have generally been attributed to neuro-behavioral abnormalities than withdrawal.

The long-term effects of perinatal cocaine exposure are yet to be established. The most consistent findings show obstetrical complications, low birth weight, smaller head circumference, abnormal neonatal behavior and dead tissue, from lack of blood flow, in the brain at birth.

Children with this exposure are easily distracted, passive and face a variety of visual-perceptual problems and difficulties with fine motor skills.

Dramatic withdrawal symptoms are the most frequently observed

consequence to newborns from prenatal narcotics exposure. Restlessness, tremulousness, disturbed sleep and feeding, stuffy nose, vomiting, diarrhea, a high-pitched cry, fever, irregular breathing, or seizures usually start within 48-72 hours.

The heroin-exposed infant also sneezes, twitches, hiccups and weeps. Occasionally, these symptoms do not begin until two to four weeks after delivery.

This irritability, resulting from over arousal of the central nervous system, usually ends after a month but can persist for three months or more.

Growth disturbances and other behavioral effects such as hyperactivity, shortened attention spans, temper tantrums, slowed psychomotor development, and impaired visual motor functioning have been noted in infants and older children born to opiate-dependent mothers.

Caffeine intake before and during pregnancy has been associated with an increase risk of fetal loss.

Newborns with perinatal alcohol and other drug exposure have hospital stays three times longer than those born to mothers who are drug-free.

If you would like more information about alcohol and other drug birth defects call me at 785-899-3848.

Goodland student honored by governor

Timothy Kafka, a Goodland High School senior, was selected to attend the 20th annual Governor's Scholars Award Program May 4 in Topeka.

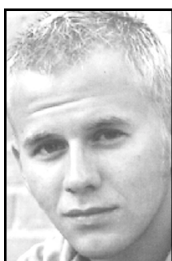
Timothy is the son of Tony and Sandy Kafka of Goodland.

The ceremony honors the top a percent of Kansas high school seniors from accredited public and private schools.

"I am honored to recognize our

state's high school scholars," Gov. Kathleen Sebelius said. "Each of these students share a commitment to excellence and they are the future leaders of our communities."

The program is coordinated for the governor by the Confidence in Kansas Public Education Task Force and paid for by donations from the Kansas Bankers Association and other businesses.



Kafka

Senior wins Elks scholarship

Tiffany Schwasinger, a Goodland High School senior, has been awarded a \$600 scholarship through the Most Valuable Student Scholarship Program sponsored by the Elks National Foundation and the Kansas Elks Association.

Tiffany is the daughter of Richard and Diane Schwasinger of Goodland.

She plans to attend the University of Nebraska in Lincoln and then to attend medical school and attain her doctoral degree in virology.

Her application was processed and submitted through the Goodland Elks Lodge.



Schwasinger

KU alumni association honors area students

The University of Kansas Alumni Association honored students from 18 Kansas high schools, including Goodland, Brewster, St. Francis and Wallace County, on Tuesday, April 22.

The seniors attended a dinner reception at The Gateway in Oberlin, where they were singled out as Kansas Honor Scholars.

Honored were:
Goodland High — Amanda Angelos, Alan Cebula, Jenna Deines, Stephanie Fairbanks, Amanda Hoffman, Timothy Kafka, Bill Linin, Alyssa Mason and Tiffany Schwasinger.

Brewster High — Alicia Collett.
St. Francis High — Heidi Rodweder, Dallas Walz, Jennifer

Weems and Dennon Zimbelman.
Wallace County — Richard Baum, JoAnna Klings, Darci Siebert and Jodi Siebert.

The University of Kansas Endowment Association and the alumni association began sponsoring the Kansas Honors Program in 1971, and since then it has honored 85,600 students in the top

10 percent of Kansas senior classes.

Perry and Janet Warren of Goodland are the Sherman County coordinators; Mike and Brenda Day of St. Francis are the Cheyenne County coordinators; and Sharon Steele of Colby is the coordinator for Thomas and Wallace counties.

matters of record

Accidents

The following accidents were reported to the Goodland Police Department:

May 5 — Pearl M. Parish was southbound in a 1995 Pontiac in the alley on the 300 block of Eustis and hit a grass dumpster.

May 12 — An unknown vehicle hit a 1993 Ford owned by Levi Wasemiller in the 800 block of Washington and left the scene.

Municipal Traffic

The following traffic fines have been paid in the Municipal Court:

April 23 — David L. Fisher, 27, of Goodland was fined \$136 for improper trash dumping.

Hannah Schlosser, 17, of Goodland was fined \$76 for disobeying a stop sign.

April 25 — Alan James Johnson, 17, of Goodland was fined \$92 for

speeding, 34/20.

April 30 — Vera L. Steiger, 63, of Rexford was fined \$76 for speeding, 28/20.

May 1 — Kaylor R. Jantz, 21, of

Syracuse was fined \$76 for speeding, 40/30.

Rodney R. Nonamaker Jr., 19, of Goodland was fined \$76 for speeding, 28/20.

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Atwood Ambassadors
Dave Brown Phone: 785-626-3728
708 Main Street Cell: 785-626-4770
Atwood, KS 67730 Email: 66cobra@ruralnet.net

The 21st Annual Atwood Early Rod Run is sure to bring some surprises this Year. Be sure to be here Friday night for the fireworks and outdoor dance after the Pizza & Bowling Social.

Hope to see you in Atwood on May 16, 17, & 18.

For registration forms and all inquiries see us at www.atwoodkansas.com or contact Dave Brown at the above address or phone number.

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