

## **About FASD**

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) refers to the range of effects that can occur in an individual whose mother drank alcohol while pregnant. The effects can include lifelong physical, mental, cognitive and behavioural disabilities. FASD is often called a “hidden” or “invisible” disability because most people affected do not have noticeable physical features.

Individuals with FASD are more likely to have trouble with

- Memory
- Understanding cause and effect (consequences)
- Getting used to changes in routines
- Sensory stimulation - handling a lot of different sensations or feelings at one time
- Learning life skills
- Forming and keeping healthy relationships

FASD is complicated and not fully understood

- Not all children exposed prenatally to alcohol develop FASD
- Nutrition may play a role in the severity or prevention of FASD
- There may be a genetic component to the expression of FASD
- The extent and prevalence of FASD is unknown due to the limitations of current diagnostic tools

FASD has a significant impact on the community

- Over-representation of FASD affected people in justice system
- Increased educational demands
- Growing burden on healthcare system
- Increasing pressure on families
- Higher social services burden
- Lifetime cost of FASD is estimated at \$1 million per case (~4,000 new cases yearly = \$4 billion annual increase)

## **About the Canada-Israel International Fetal Alcohol Consortium**

On a mission to Israel, Premier Selinger and other Manitoba leaders recognized that the pioneering research on embryo development at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem combined with Manitoba’s FASD expertise had the potential to revolutionize the prevention and diagnosis of this disorder.

A \$3.0 million research initiative between the Province of Manitoba, Canadian Friends of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, University of Manitoba and Hebrew University was created and called the Canada-Israel International Fetal Alcohol Consortium (CIIFAC). The focus of the research is on the role of nutrition in mitigating the risks and reducing the effects of FASD.