



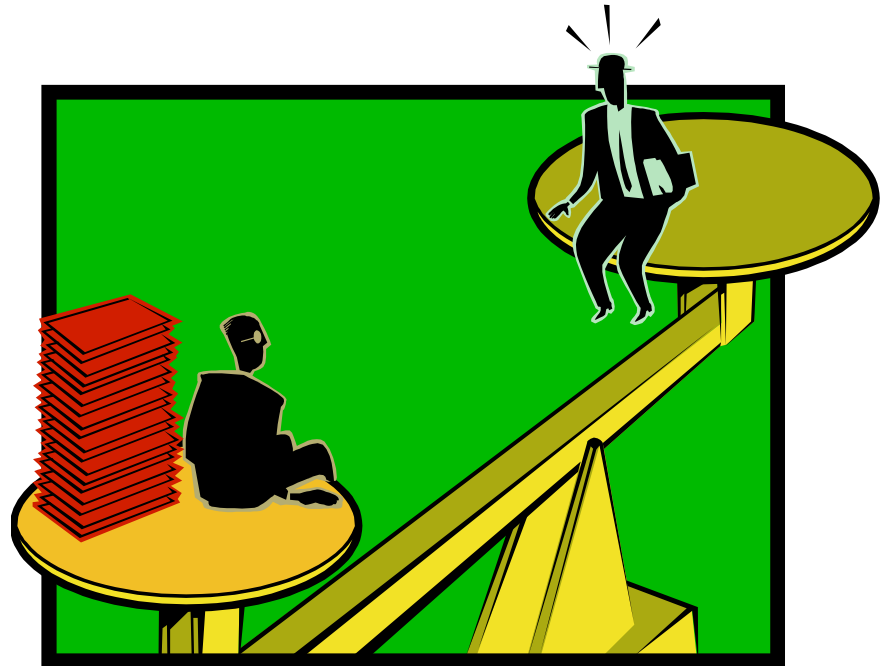
# Session 2: Alcohol and Recovery



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration  
Center for Substance Abuse Treatment  
[www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)

# Alcohol in the Brain

- Alcohol upsets a delicate balance between chemical systems that *stimulate* and chemical systems that *inhibit* functions of the brain and body.



# Adaptation

- Adaptation → Dependence
- Absence → Withdrawal Symptoms

# Withdrawal Symptoms

- Seizures
- Tremors
- Nausea
- Auditory or visual hallucinations
- Insomnia
- Agitation
- Confusion

# Delirium Tremens

- Rapid heart rate
- Increased body temperature
- Tremors
- Loss of ability to control muscle movement
- Increased blood pressure
- Abnormally fast breathing
- Sweating
- Altered mental status
- Hallucinations
- Cardiovascular collapse and death

# Incidence

- About half of Americans ages 12 and older report drinking alcohol.
- About 3 in 10 (30 percent) American adults drink at levels that increase their risk for physical, emotional, and social problems.
- Of these heavy drinkers, about 1 in 4 currently has an alcohol abuse or dependence disorder.

# Incidence by Gender and Age

- More men report being current drinkers than do women.
- The rate of alcohol *dependence* is also lower for women than for men.
- The incidence of heavy alcohol use is highest among young adults between ages 21 and 29.
- The incidence of alcohol problems is lowest among adults ages 65 and older.

# Initial Effects of Alcohol

- Feelings of euphoria
- Talkativeness, sociability
- Lowered inhibitions





# Later Effects

- Sedation and drowsiness
- Trouble with balance
- Impaired peripheral vision
- Delayed reaction time
- Slurring of words
- Vomiting
- Sleeping
- Possible blackout

# Long-Term Effects

Heavy drinking over time damages the

- Liver
- Digestive system
- Cardiovascular system
- Immune system
- Endocrine system
- Nervous system

# Liver

- Alcoholic hepatitis
- Cirrhosis



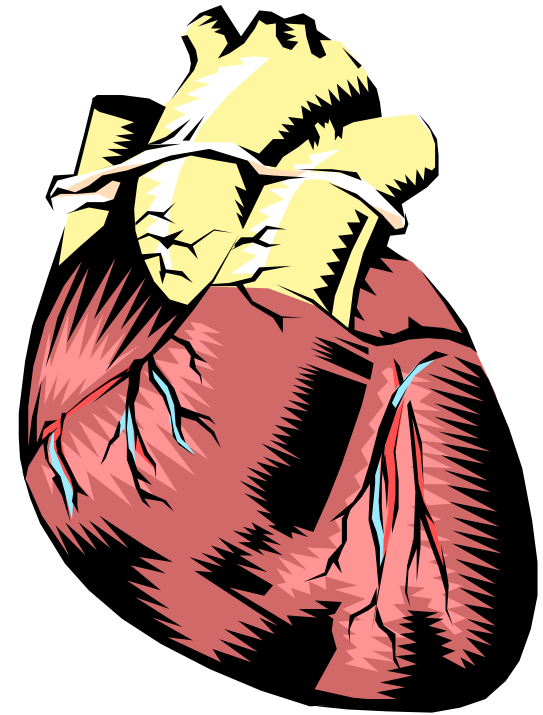
**Alcohol dependence is the leading cause of liver-related deaths in the United States.**

# Digestive System

- Inflammation of the esophagus
- Esophageal cancer
- Enlarged blood vessels in the esophagus (often fatal)
- Pancreatitis
- Cancers of the throat, colon, rectum

# Cardiovascular System

- Serious heart disease
- Irregular and/or weak heartbeats
- High blood pressure
- Increased risk of stroke
- Damaged platelets/increased risk of bleeding



# Immune System

- Damaged white and red blood cells
- Increased risk of infectious disease
- Immune system attack on the body

# Endocrine System

- Diabetes
- Altered release of reproductive hormones, growth hormone, and testosterone
- Decreased testicle and ovary size
- Disrupted sperm and egg production
- Sexual dysfunction in both men and women

# Nervous System

- Peripheral neuropathy
- Wernicke's syndrome
- Korsakoff's syndrome
- Loss of mental function
- Reduced brain size
- Changes in the function of brain cells





# Behavioral Effects

- Domestic violence and child abuse
- Accidents
- Family problems
- Strained relationships with colleagues
- Absence from or lateness to work
- Loss of employment because of decreased productivity
- Committing or being the victim of violence
- Driving under the influence arrests

# Alcohol and Women



- Compared with men, women develop alcohol-related disease more quickly and with less alcohol.

# Alcohol and Pregnancy

- Babies born to mothers who drank during pregnancy may have mental retardation or other learning and behavioral problems.



# Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders

- The most serious risk during pregnancy is fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD).
- FASD is the leading known cause of mental retardation in the United States.



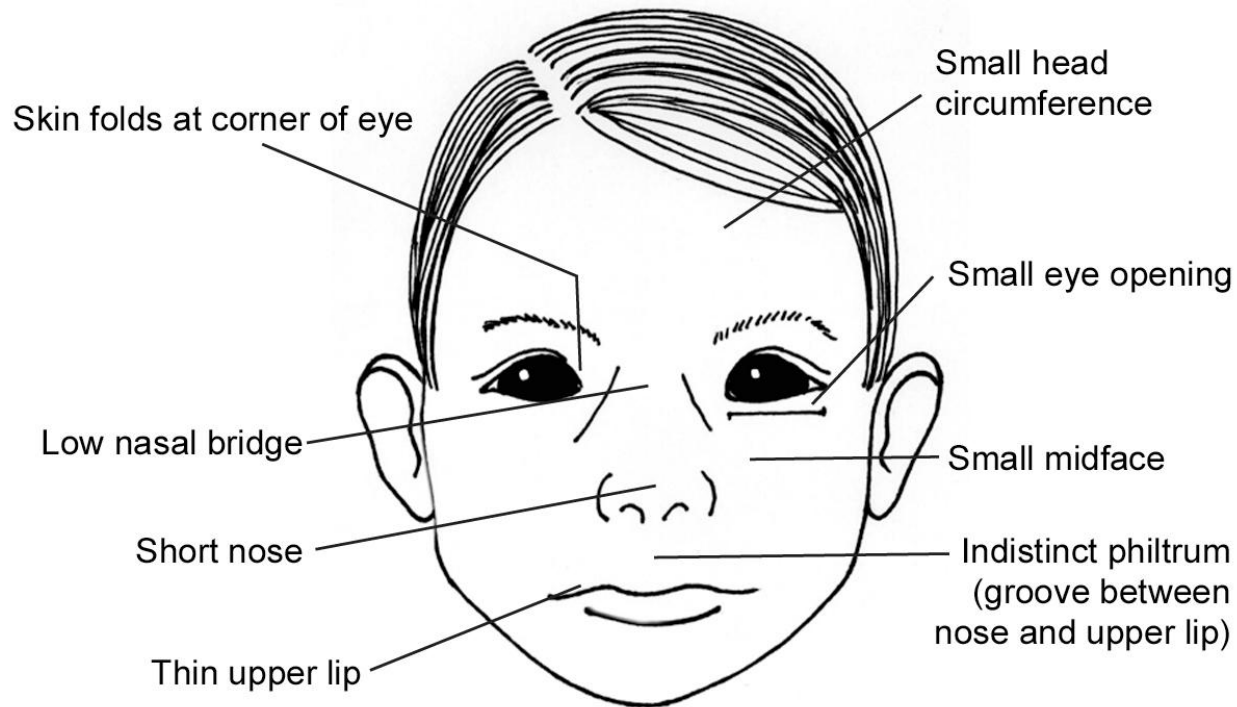
# Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders

## *Cognitive and Behavioral Impairments*

- Behavioral and neurological problems associated with FASD may lead to poor academic performance and legal and employment difficulties in adolescence and adulthood.

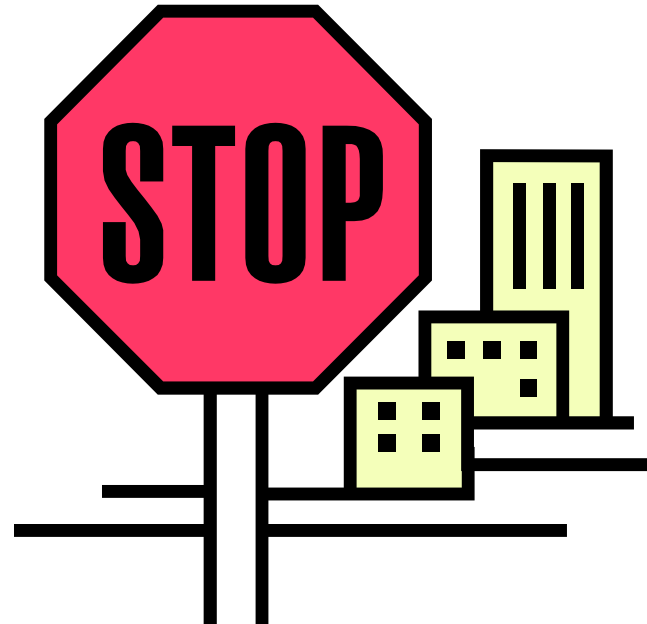
# Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders

## *Craniofacial Features*



# Total Abstinence

- Clients in Matrix treatment are asked to stop using all illicit drugs *and* alcohol.



# Alcohol Triggers Are Everywhere

- Advertisements
- Movies
- TV shows
- Friends and family who drink
- Celebrations and holidays





# Internal Triggers

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Loneliness
- Stress
- Anger
- Guilt



# Relapse Warning

- People in recovery who drink alcohol are **8 times** more likely to relapse to stimulant use than those who don't drink.

# Relapse

Alcohol → Lowered inhibitions

Add a trigger, and the result may be

**impulsive use of stimulants.**

# Other Reasons for Abstaining

- Drinking prevents people in recovery from directly confronting their stimulant use disorder.
- Drinking puts people in recovery at risk of becoming dependent on alcohol.

# Plan Not To Drink

- Think about other ways of celebrating.
- Avoid being around others who are drinking.
- Think about other ways of spending time with friends.
- Make friends with others in recovery.
- Practice saying “no thank you.”
- Avoid going to bars and parties.
- Talk to your family.



# Plan To Cope

- Attend 12-Step or mutual-help group meetings.
- Discuss your feelings in group.
- Obtain a 12-Step sponsor.
- Practice relaxation techniques.
- Practice HALT.
- Remind yourself that uncomfortable feelings are normal and will pass.
- Obtain help from a therapist.