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Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

Patient name: _____ Admission: _____

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I. The client/caregiver can define fetal alcohol syndrome.

- A. It is when a baby is born with a group of birth defects that is a result of the mother drinking alcohol during pregnancy.
- B. These defects are irreversible and can include physical, mental, and behavioral problems.

II. The client/caregiver can list signs and symptoms of fetal alcohol syndrome.

- A. Facial features that include
 - Small eyelid openings
 - Sunken nasal bridge
 - Very thin upper lip
 - Short upturned nose
 - Smooth skin surface between the nose and upper lip
- B. Small teeth with poor enamel.
- C. Heart defects
- D. Deformity of joints, limbs, and fingers
- E. Slow physical growth before and after birth
- F. Vision problems, including nearsightedness
- G. Small head circumference and brain size
- H. Mental retardation and delayed development
- I. Abnormal behavior, such as
 - Short attention span
 - Hyperactivity
 - Poor impulse control
 - Extreme nervousness and anxiety

III. The client/caregiver can explain causes of fetal alcohol syndrome.

- A. Any alcohol entering the mother's bloodstream crosses the placenta to the fetus.
- B. The fetus will metabolize alcohol slower and have a higher alcohol concentration.
- C. The risk of alcohol causing defects to the fetus is present at any time during the pregnancy.

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- D. Much of the damage to the fetus can be done during the first trimester, when many of the organs are developing. Stress that damages can occur at any time during pregnancy.

IV. The client/caregiver can list ways to prevent fetal alcohol syndrome and measures to deal with damage.

- A. Fetal alcohol syndrome is completely preventable by not drinking alcohol during pregnancy.
- B. If you are sexually active and having unprotected sex, think about giving up alcohol.
- C. Seek professional help to make diagnosis if fetal alcohol syndrome is suspected.
- D. Seek substance abuse counseling and treatment if you have given birth to a child with fetal alcohol syndrome.
- E. Seek help from healthcare professionals and mental health counselors to cope with the health and behavior problems of child.
- F. Possible complications for child with FAS are
 - Drug abuse
 - Dropping out of school
 - Ending up in juvenile justice system

RESOURCES

National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
800-66-NOFAS
www.nofas.org

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism
301-443-3860
www.niaaa.nih.gov

Drinking and Your Pregnancy
http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/DrinkingPregnancy_HTML/pregnancy.htm

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
Treatment Facility Locator
800-662-HELP
www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov

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