



# NURSE NETWORK

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## The Fabulous FAS Quiz Show

The Fabulous FAS Quiz show was developed by the March of Dimes, West Washington Chapter and the Washington State Department of Health to educate middle school students about Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Fetal Alcohol Effects (FAE). The fast-paced, 15 minute video in game show format focuses on the cause, damage, and prevention of FAS. Also explored is the relationship between alcohol consumption, sexual activity and alcohol related birth defects as well as acceptance of people with FAS or FAE.

Eight classes at two Atlantic County schools participated in the Fabulous FAS Quiz Show in 1998-1999. Pre-tests were administered to all eight classes. Four of these classes (two at each school) received the FAS Prevention curriculum, the remaining four (two at each school) were designated as the control group. Two weeks following the implementation of the curriculum, post-tests were administered to all classes.

Results from the first post-test revealed that the program significantly improved FAS knowledge. Specifically, students who received the curriculum were more likely than students who did not receive the curriculum to recognize the term FAS, to report accurate knowledge about FAS and to attribute FAS to individuals. Findings regarding personal behavior and general FAS attitudes were less conclusive but still an improvement over the pre-test. The follow-up post-test, to be conducted this year, might illuminate more conclusive evidence that the curriculum changes general FAS attitudes and behaviors.

We know that personal choices around substance abuse and sexual activity often are formed in early middle school. The population is at high risk for developing attitudes and behaviors that could lead to their having children with FAS/FAE. The Fabulous FAS Quiz show focuses on 7th, 8th and 9th-graders specifically for this reason.

Debra Asselta, RN, BS, Coordinator of Pediatric Education at the Southern NJ Perinatal Cooperative and presenter of the Quiz Show said, "Not everyone is aware of or interested in FAS. We are working to change that fact. Our goal is to prevent alcohol-related birth defects such as organic brain

damage, facial abnormalities, growth deficits, and, the biggest one, mental retardation."

Since it is not known why some women give birth to alcohol-affected children while others, who drink the same amount, have babies that exhibit no signs of defects, it is advised that pregnant women not drink at all.

Students who learn about this 100% preventable outcome will be motivated to abstain from consuming alcohol during pregnancy. "Since young people often develop their beliefs and patterns of alcohol use and sexual activity before they practice them, 6th - 9th-graders were deemed the appropriate age," added Asselta.

The only way a child can be born with FAS is if the mother drinks during her pregnancy. This condition is 100% preventable. FAS is easily a leading cause of mental retardation in the Western World. The cost is an estimated \$320 million each year for treatment; a lifetime estimate cost for an FAS child is \$1.4 million.

For more information on the Fabulous FAS Quiz Show and how you can get your community involved in preventing FAS, contact Debra Asselta, RN, BS, Coordinator of Pediatric Education at the Southern NJ Perinatal Cooperative at (856) 665-6000.

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# Inhalant Abuse: Its Nothing to Sniff At!

One in five students in America has used an inhalant to get high by the time he or she reaches the eighth grade. Many adults don't know that inhalants are as popular among middle school students as marijuana. Even fewer adults or teens know the deadly effects the poisons in these products have on the brain and body when they are inhaled or "huffed."

Learn more about inhalant abuse, how to recognize it and what you can do to stop it at SNJPC's upcoming program, *Inhalant Abuse: Its Nothing to Sniff At!* on March 23rd at the Coliseum in Voorhees, NJ.

This is a crucial time as adolescents are quickly discovering that some common household products are inexpensive to obtain, easy to hide and a quick way to get high. According to national surveys, inhaling dangerous products is becoming one of the most widespread problems in the country. More than a million people used inhalants to get high just last year.

Popularly abused inhalants include: white out, rubber cement, whipped cream, nail polish, gasoline, markers, spray paint, glue, air fresheners, paints, freon, lighter fluid, helium, butane, solvents and dry cleaning fluids.

Nearly all of these inhalants produce effects similar to anesthetics. Depending upon dosage, the user can experience stimulation, reduced inhibition or loss of consciousness.

The most serious consequence of inhalant abuse is Sudden Sniffing Death Syndrome, which can occur the 1st, 10th or 100th time an inhalant is used. Other effects include damage to the heart, kidney, brain, liver, bone marrow and other organs. Results similar to Fetal Alcohol Syndrome may also

occur when inhalants are used during pregnancy. Inhalants are physically and psychologically addicting and users suffer withdrawal symptoms.

For more information about this program contact the Cooperative at (856) 665-6000 or visit our website at [www.snjpc.org](http://www.snjpc.org). N

## Understanding Obstetric Anesthesia

It is important for nurses to keep abreast of new advances in obstetric anesthesia. This ranges from the best options for labor analgesia in the healthy patient to management of complications such as pre-eclampsia to anesthetic techniques for caesarean sections.

"Options for safe and effective medication during childbirth have expanded," explained Sylvia Speller, RN, Coordinator of Perinatal Education, Southern NJ Perinatal Cooperative. "Increasing nurses' knowledge of mechanisms, actions and side effects of pain relief enable nurses to better assist patients in making anesthesia choices appropriate to their situation."

To help nurses achieve a better understanding of current obstetric anesthesia the Southern NJ Perinatal Cooperative is sponsoring a program on *Understanding Obstetric Anesthesia* on March 2. The program will be held at the Barry Brown Education Center adjacent to Virtua Health - West Jersey Hospital/Voorhees from 8:30 to 10:45 am.

This breakfast program will focus on regional techniques for

using analgesia during labor and delivery, including walking epidurals. Also to be discussed are the types of anesthesia used during caesarean sections and the controversies regarding obstetric anesthesia.

The demand for pain relief during labor and delivery by women is growing. Researchers from the University of Colorado School of Medicine at Denver surveyed 750 hospitals nationwide regarding obstetric anesthesia staffing, availability and choices. The use of regional analgesia (epidural, spinal or combined spinal-epidural techniques) for labor shows no signs of slowing. In larger hospitals, the use of regional anesthesia tripled from 1981 to 1997. 66 percent of women in the largest hospitals received regional analgesia in 1997 versus 55 percent in 1992 and 22 percent in 1981. The percentage of women receiving regional analgesia in smaller hospitals nearly doubled from 21 percent in 1992 to 42 percent in 1997.

For more information about this program call the Perinatal Cooperative at (856) 665-6000 or visit the education section of our website at [www.snjpc.org](http://www.snjpc.org). N

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*Comments and suggestions should be directed to Nurse Network Editors at the above address.*

## Websites of Interest

The following are a list of websites from the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Associates and Practitioners that may be of interest to pediatric nurses:

**Global ChildNet:**  
[edie.cprost.sfu.ca/gcnet](http://edie.cprost.sfu.ca/gcnet)

An organization which uses the internet to offer a range of easily accessible, child health related, on-line services

**KidsDoctor:** [www.kidsdoctor.com](http://www.kidsdoctor.com)  
What every parent needs to know.

**MedWeb:**  
[www.medweb.emory.edu/MedWeb](http://www.medweb.emory.edu/MedWeb)  
Extensive pediatric resource listing.

**National Association of Pediatric Nurse Associates and Practitioners (NAPNAP):** [www.napnap.org](http://www.napnap.org)  
Association to provide a professional home for pediatric nurse practitioners and specialty nurses in advanced practice providing primary health care to infants, children, adolescents and their families.

**Parent News:** [www.parent.net](http://www.parent.net)  
More news specifically for parents.

**Pediatric Assessment Online:**  
[www.solutions-etc.com/PAO](http://www.solutions-etc.com/PAO)  
ONA (Ohio Nurses Association) approved continuing nursing education for registered nurses.

**Pediatric Burn Assessment:**  
[www.nursesworld.com/er\\_peds3.htm](http://www.nursesworld.com/er_peds3.htm)  
Diagrams and charts provided.

**North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition:**  
[www.naspgn.org](http://www.naspgn.org)  
National professional organization for all interested in pediatric gastroenterology and nutrition.

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## New Trend in Teen Smoking Leads to Health Warnings

A new fad in smoking has public health researchers alarmed that teen smoking may rise.

In the first study to look at the prevalence of teen smoking of "bidis," hand-rolled and sweet smelling cigarettes from India, researchers found that 40 percent of Boston teens had tried the strong cigarettes. Of the 642 inner city teens surveyed, 16 percent currently smoked bidis and 8 percent were "heavy users" who had smoked more than 100 of them.

This is a heads up for health officials in New Jersey. "Bidis have not yet made a big impact locally," notes Atlantic County Health Officer Tracye McArdle. "So we have an opportunity to sound the alarm *before* this trend grows in popularity here in South Jersey."

Health officials and anti-smoking advocates are particularly concerned about bidi use because they say the cigarettes are aimed at young smokers. Bidis are cheaper than regular cigarettes and are available in such flavors as mint and strawberry. Also bidis produced higher levels of carbon monoxide, nicotine and tar than traditional cigarettes. Teens surveyed erroneously believed bidis were safer cigarettes and not as bad for you as regular tobacco cigarettes.

The study findings support the need for additional research on bidis, researchers

from the Massachusetts Tobacco Control Program wrote in a report published in the September 17 issue of Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. "The knowledge, attitude, and behavioral patterns of bidi smokers also must be assessed to understand this phenomenon," they wrote.

### **Tobacco Use: NJ and the US**

- High school students who smoke:  
NJ - 37%; US - 36%
- High school males who use smokeless tobacco:  
NJ - 9%; US - 15%
- Number of kids (under 18) who become new daily smokers each year:  
NJ - 31,000; US - 1,226,000
- Kids exposed to secondhand smoke at home:  
NJ - 398,000;  
US - 15,500,000
- Number of packs of cigarettes illegally sold to kids in New Jersey each year:  
NJ - 8.2 million;  
US - 255.6 million
- Adults in New Jersey who smoke: NJ - 21%, US - 23%

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Check out the Southern NJ Perinatal Cooperative's web site at [www.snjpc.org](http://www.snjpc.org)

*For information on conferences, meetings, events and programs.*