# Co-Occurring Conditions

## Associated with Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

Prenatal alcohol exposure can cause a range of lifelong effects known as Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). These effects may include physical concerns, sensory sensitivities, learning challenges and differences in behaviour. Physical health issues reported in adults living with FASD include hearing, dentition, heart, cancer, gastritis, kidney stones, bladder, diabetes, thyroid and seizures. Mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder and ADHD, are also common.

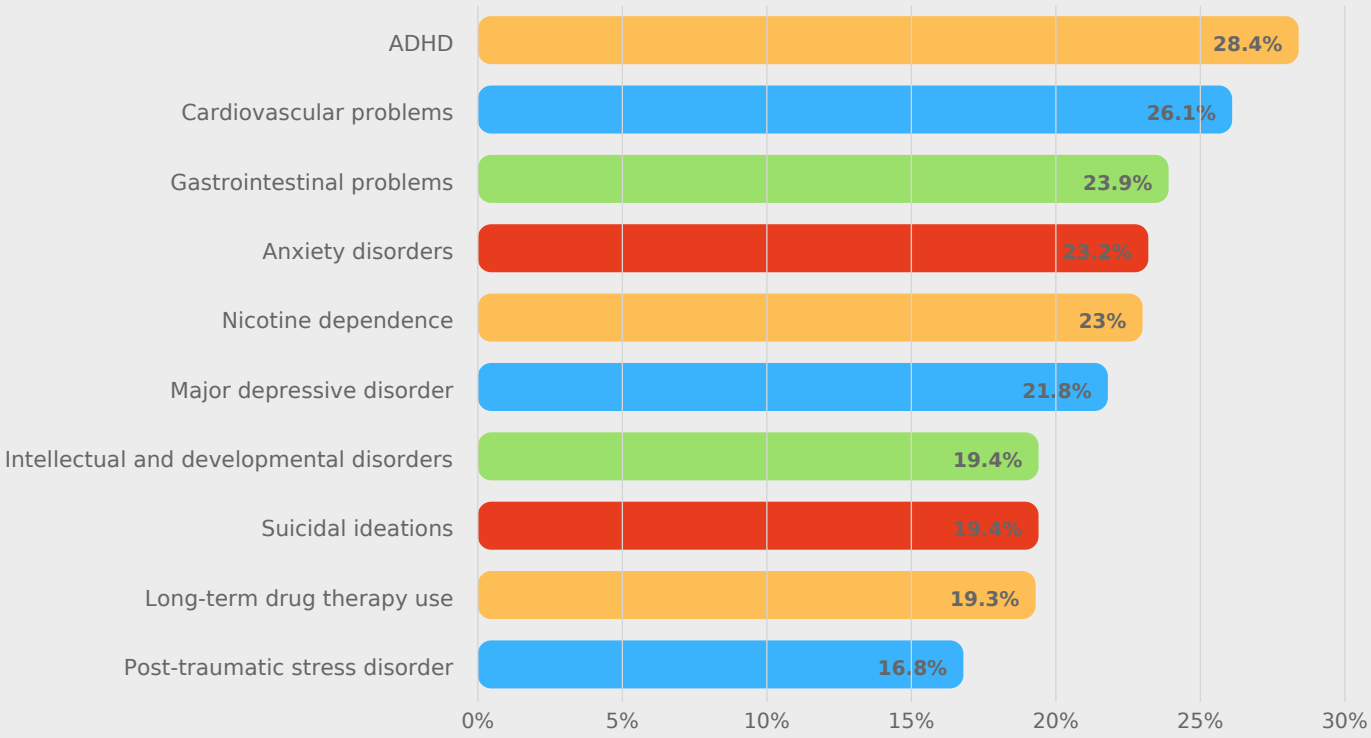
**428 identified co-occurring conditions associated with FASD**

**1 in 13** **Irish people may be living with FASD**

Based on the HSE upper prevalence estimate of 7.4% (September 2022).

## 10 Most Common Co-Occurring Conditions

Percentage of people with FASD who have each co-occurring condition




**US comparison:** 1 in 20 Americans may have FASD (May et al., 2018). This is a US estimate, not an Irish prevalence figure.

# Other Common Co-Occurring Conditions

**Sleep disorders**

**Bipolar disorder**

**Asthma**

**Autism**

**Immune issues**

## Congenital heart defects (CHDs)

CHDs are reported to be 5 times as common among children living with FASD than among children without FASD.

Health care professionals are encouraged to consider prenatal alcohol exposure and FASD when supporting patients of all ages with overlapping health conditions.

## Further information and research

### RCSI research | September 2025

Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder in Ireland: Wellbeing, Living Experience, and The Need for Change. Harper, Sharif & Burke (2025).

OPEN RESOURCE ↗

### HSE position paper | 2022

HSE Position on Prevention of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders. Includes the 2.8%-7.4% prevalence estimate.

OPEN RESOURCE ↗

### FASD Ireland

Information, education and support for people living with FASD, families, carers and professionals.

OPEN RESOURCE ↗

## Sources and notes

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2025). About Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASDs).
2. Waite, D. & Burd, L. (2023). Common Developmental Trajectories and Clinical Identification of Children with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders: A Synthesis of the Literature. Advances in Drug and Alcohol Research, 3, 10877.
3. Coles, C.D. et al. (2024). Prenatal alcohol exposure and health at midlife: Self-reported health outcomes in two cohorts. Alcohol: Clinical and Experimental Research, 48(11), 2045-2059.
4. Coles, C.D. et al. (2022). Prenatal alcohol exposure and mental health at midlife: A preliminary report on two longitudinal cohorts. Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research, 46(2), 232-242.
5. Popova, S. et al. (2016). Comorbidity of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder: a systematic review and meta-analysis. The Lancet, 387(10022), 978-987.
7. May, P.A. et al. (2018). Prevalence of fetal alcohol spectrum disorders in 4 US communities. JAMA, 319(5), 474-482.
8. Attell, B.K. et al. (2025). Comorbidities associated with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders in the United States. Scientific Reports, 15, 29704.
9. Dorsey, A.N. et al. (2025). Prevalence of congenital heart defects among children with and without diagnosed fetal alcohol spectrum disorders, 2016-2022. Drug and Alcohol Dependence, 274, 112790.
Irish prevalence statement: HSE, HSE Position on Prevention of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (September 2022), estimating prevalence at 2.8%-7.4%; “up to 1 in 13” reflects the upper estimate.

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