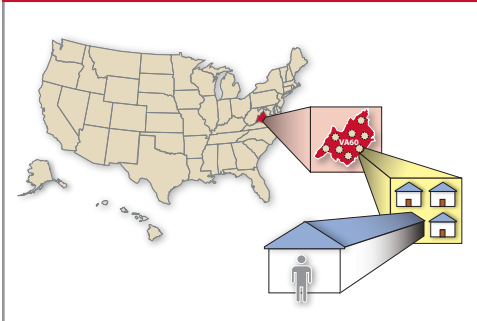


The NSDUH Report

Data Spotlight

September 9, 2013

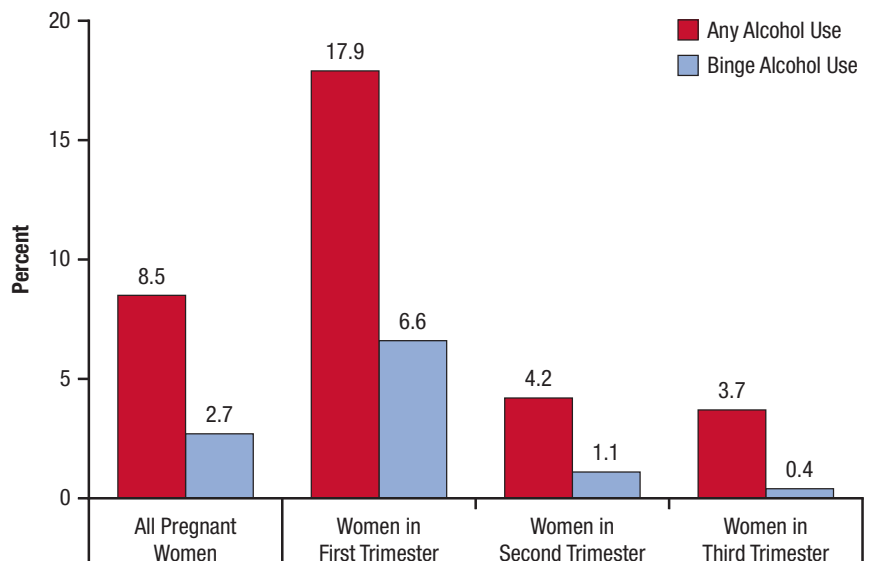


18 Percent of Pregnant Women Drink Alcohol during Early Pregnancy

Women who drink alcohol while pregnant increase the risk that their infants will have physical, learning, and/or behavior problems, including Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).¹ These problems are caused by alcohol and can be lifelong. Combined 2011 to 2012 data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) show that 8.5 percent of pregnant women aged 15 to 44 drank alcohol in the past month (Figure). Also, 2.7 percent binge drank.² Among women aged 15 to 44 who were not pregnant, 55.5 percent drank alcohol in the past month, and 24.7 percent binge drank. Most alcohol use by pregnant women occurred during the first trimester. Alcohol use was lower during the second and third trimesters than during the first (4.2 and 3.7 percent vs. 17.9 percent). These findings suggest that many pregnant women are getting the message and not drinking alcohol.

Alcohol can disrupt fetal development at any stage during a pregnancy, even before a woman knows she is pregnant.³ If a woman is pregnant, there is no known amount or type of alcohol that is safe for her to drink.⁴ To prevent problems like FASD, a woman who is pregnant or likely to become pregnant should not drink alcohol. For more information on alcohol and pregnancy, see <http://www.fascenter.samhsa.gov/>.

Past Month Alcohol Use and Binge Alcohol Use among Pregnant Women Aged 15 to 44, Overall and by Trimester*: 2011 and 2012



* Pregnant women are defined as women aged 15 to 44 who reported that they were pregnant at the time of the survey interview. Pregnant women aged 15 to 44 not reporting trimester are excluded.

1. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. (1996). *Drinking and your pregnancy* (NIH Publication No. 96-4101). Retrieved from http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/DrinkingPregnancy_HTML/pregnancy.htm
2. Binge alcohol use is defined as drinking five or more drinks on the same occasion (i.e., at the same time or within a couple of hours of each other) on at least 1 day in the past 30 days.
3. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. (2012). *Fetal alcohol exposure*. Retrieved from <http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/alcohol-health/fetal-alcohol-exposure>
4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2011). *Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs): Facts about FASDs*. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/fasd/facts.html>

Source: National Surveys on Drug Use and Health (NSDUHs), 2011 and 2012. NSDUH is an annual survey sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The survey collects data by administering questionnaires to a representative sample of the population through face-to-face interviews at their places of residence.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is the agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that leads public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation. SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities. The **Data Spotlight** may be copied without permission. Citation of the source is appreciated. Find this report and those on similar topics online at <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/>.

