Alcohol, Contraception and Preconception

Information for Service Providers

Strategies for Reducing Alcohol-Exposed Pregnancies

1. Reducing alcohol use
2. Increasing use of effective contraception
3. Both reducing alcohol use and increasing use of effective contraception

Preconception Care: Helping Women Prepare for Pregnancy

While 50% of pregnancies are unplanned, this means that 50% of pregnancies are planned. Service providers can help women to consider:

- What are the reasons I choose to drink?
- In what ways is alcohol a part of my life?
- How would I feel about not drinking at all at the next party I’m invited to?
- Do I associate drinking with smoking, eating, watching TV or other activities?

Can alcohol use affect fertility?

Emerging research suggests that alcohol use can have both short- and long-term effects of fertility.

- Light drinking (1-5 drinks a week) can reduce a woman’s chances of conceiving
- Long-term heavy drinking can cause adult women to have irregular periods or stop ovulating, cause periods to stop altogether or lead to early menopause
- Heavy drinkers who become pregnant are more likely to have miscarriages
- Heavy drinking or binge drinking can lead to vomiting and reduce the effectiveness of birth control pills (emergency contraception is an option)

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References
4. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, 'Alcohol and Hormones'. in Alcohol Alert No. 261994.

Let’s Talk

The Prevention Conversation

It’s time to talk about alcohol and pregnancy