Binge Drinking in the Preconception Period

Information published by the Alcohol Team of the Division of Adult and Community Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, indicates that binge drinking in the preconception period is associated with unintended pregnancies resulting in a live birth. Preconception binge drinkers were more likely to engage in other risky behaviors, including drinking during pregnancy.

This research, published in the journal *Pediatrics* (Volume 111, Number 5), assessed the relationship between unintended pregnancy resulting in a live birth and binge drinking in the 3 months before pregnancy (labeled “the preconception period”) and to characterize women who are of childbearing age and binge drink. The information was from 15 states that participate in the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS). Data was analyzed from over 72,000 respondents, and of those, 45% of all pregnancies reported were unintended. Compared with women with intended pregnancy, women with unintended pregnancy were more likely to be young and to report preconception binge drinking. Overall, 14% of women reported preconception binge drinking. Women who binge drank in the preconception period were more likely to be white and unmarried; to smoke and be exposed to violence in the preconception period; and to consume alcohol, binge drink, and smoke during pregnancy.

Obviously, binge drinking in the preconception period is associated with a cluster of high risk behaviors, including smoking and consuming alcohol during pregnancy. The authors of this study call for comprehensive interventions to prevent and reduce binge drinking in the preconception period and to reduce unintended pregnancies. For further information about this study, please see the American Academy of Pediatrics publication...
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