New CDC Data Show Drinking While Pregnant Still a Problem

The number of women who drink alcohol while pregnant is not decreasing, according to a 15-year study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Approximately 1 in 8 women drank any amount of alcohol while pregnant, the study says. The drinking patterns persisted despite repeated warnings from the Surgeon General about the dangers of drinking alcohol while pregnant. The Surgeon General have told pregnant women, and women who may become pregnant, to abstain from alcohol consumption in order to eliminate the chance of giving birth to a baby with alcohol-related birth defects.

The CDC analysis, as well as a study published by the United States Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), indicates that far too many women use substances (especially alcohol) during their pregnancies. The CDC study, “Alcohol Use Among Women of Childbearing Age, United States, 1991-2005,” is in the CDC’s Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR). The CDC study also found that 1 of every 50 pregnant women engaged in binge drinking each year during the 15 years of surveillance. The study found that pregnant women most likely to report any alcohol use were 35-44 years of age (17.7 percent), college graduates (13.3 percent), and unmarried (13.4 percent). Pregnant women who binge drink were more likely to be employed and unmarried than were pregnant women who did not binge drink. This study did not examine the reasons why women are still drinking while pregnant.

For more information about the CDC study, please visit http://www.cdc.gov/fasd

For more information regarding FASD and other prenatal exposure issues, please contact Karen Kuehn Howell, Ph.D., at the Maternal Substance Abuse and Child Development
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