



What Everyone Needs to Know About Alcohol and Other Drug Use During Pregnancy

Myth: Very few women use alcohol or other drugs while pregnant.

Fact: Over 12% of all pregnant women surveyed have used alcohol in the previous month and approximately 15% of women have used illegal drugs during their pregnancy.

Myth: Most women stop using alcohol or other drugs when they learn they are pregnant.

Fact: If offered treatment, 94% of addicted pregnant women refuse. However, when educated about the effects of drugs on their baby, women are more likely to quit.

Myth: It is legal to use alcohol and tobacco. They aren't considered drugs and won't hurt my baby.

Fact: Alcohol and tobacco are drugs. The effects of alcohol and tobacco are just as harmful to a baby as other drugs. In fact, alcohol use during pregnancy is the #1 cause of mental retardation in children.

Myth: I've been using alcohol and other drugs during my pregnancy, so why should I stop now?

Fact: Stopping substance abuse at any point during pregnancy will increase the chances that the baby will be born healthy. To continue to use alcohol or other drugs may adversely affect the child throughout his or her life.

Myth: Drug use during pregnancy does not affect my child's ability to learn.

Fact: The child of a mother who uses substances during pregnancy is more likely to have special education needs, learning disabilities and be subject to emotional and psychological difficulties.

Myth: A child's school performance is not affected by parents' substance use during and after pregnancy.

Fact: Children whose parents abuse drugs or alcohol are more likely to be diagnosed with ADHD and suffer from concentration problems in school.

Myth: Drug use of parents does not affect their parenting ability.

Fact: Drug use is a contributing factor to abuse and neglect of children and can result in the removal of Kansas children from their families.

Myth: Prenatal care is too expensive.

Fact: Prenatal care is available and affordable for all mothers. Contact your local county health agency for information about prenatal care.

Myth: A child who is born to a substance abusing mother will not have lifelong effects.

Fact: Maternal substance abuse is the single most important factor in whether children will abuse substances later.

Myth: It doesn't cost more to raise a drug-exposed child over his or her lifespan.

Fact: Total costs of a drug-exposed child can exceed \$1.5 million during their lifetime.

Myth: I can seek prenatal care later. My pregnancy isn't affected by how early I go to the doctor.

Fact: Early prenatal care lowers the rate of special healthcare needs and premature births.

Myth: I have used alcohol or other drugs during my pregnancy. If I go to prenatal care, the doctor will report me and my baby will be taken away.

Fact: Your health care provider is not required to report you for substance abuse when going for prenatal care. However, if you continue to use and your baby is born with drugs in his or her system, you may be encouraged to participate in services to address the impact of substance abuse in your ability to care for your newborn. If your substance abuse isn't addressed, your baby may be taken out of the home.

Myth: Because I am pregnant and have children, there is no place for me to receive help for alcohol or other drug use.

Fact: Help and support are available for pregnant women and women with children. Visit www.hradac.com/centers.htm to locate an assessment center.

Myth: Kansas is doing nothing about substance-exposed newborns being born in our communities.

Fact: A group of state leaders has formed the Kansas Alliance for Drug Endangered Children and is establishing plans to address this problem.

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