

# Alcohol, Contraception, and Preconception

## Information for Service Providers



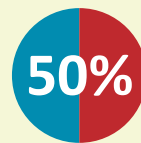
Most FASD prevention efforts focus on avoiding alcohol use during pregnancy, but another option is to prevent pregnancy during alcohol use.

Service providers can work towards ensuring effective and accessible contraception for all women who drink alcohol during their childbearing years and can address alcohol use with women who are considering or planning a pregnancy.

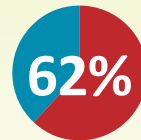
### Strategies for Reducing Alcohol-Exposed Pregnancies

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

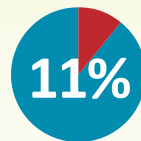
### Alcohol Use and Unplanned Pregnancies



**50%** Approximately one half of all pregnancies are unplanned. The highest rate of unintended pregnancy occurs in the age group of women at highest risk of binge drinking (ages 15 to 19)



**62%** Percentage of women who report drinking alcohol in the three months prior to pregnancy



**11%** Percentage of women who report binge drinking before knowing they were pregnant

### Preconception Care: Helping Women Prepare for Pregnancy

While 50% of pregnancies are unplanned, this also 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 am invited to?
- Do I associate drinking with smoking, eating, watching TV, having sex 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 they can have an early menopause.
- Heavy drinkers who do become pregnant are more likely to have a miscarriage
- Heavy drinking or binge drinking can lead to vomiting and reduce the effectiveness of the birth control pill (emergency contraception is an option)

### References

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