Preventing Alcohol Exposed Pregnancies

Studies from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) show that approximately one in two women of childbearing age (18-44 years) report some alcohol use in the past month, and one in eight report binge drinking. Randomized controlled trials of women of childbearing age who are risky drinkers have shown brief interventions to be a promising strategy for reducing alcohol exposed pregnancies. One such brief intervention, evaluated as part of the Project Choices Feasibility Study, resulted in a 68.5% reduced risk for an alcohol exposed pregnancy.

The Project Choices brief intervention considerably reduced the risk of an alcohol exposed pregnancy in these high risk women by altering the targeted behaviors of risky drinking and ineffective contraceptive use. Binge drinking was substantially reduced by intervention participants from 30 episodes in the past three months at baseline to 7 episodes in the past three months at the 9-month follow-up.

Findings from this study indicate that women at risk for an alcohol exposed pregnancy can be made aware of their risk, and can make subsequent changes to reduce their risk. For further information on the Project Choices brief intervention, please see Floyd, R.L., Sobell, M., Velasquez, M., Ingersoll, K., Nettleman, M., Sobell, L., Mullen, P.D., Ceperich, S., vonSternberg, K., Bolton, B., Skarpness, B., & Nagaraja, J. (2007). Preventing alcohol exposed pregnancies: A randomized controlled trial. American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 32 (1), 1-10.

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