PERINATAL DRUG ABUSE

Did you know?

- It is estimated that over 31,000 infants were born in California to mothers who used a drug (other than alcohol or tobacco) prior to their delivery.
- As much as 60% of pregnant women consume alcohol, in spite of the fact that alcohol consumption during pregnancy can cause birth defects, mental retardation, physical abnormalities, and visual/auditory impairments.
- Each drug- or alcohol-exposed baby costs the community an average of $400,000 in lifetime expenditures for foster care, medical care, and special education services.

Definition:

Percentage of women delivering a live birth in a hospital known to have used illicit drugs during pregnancy.

Year 2010 National Objective:

Increase abstinence from illicit drugs among pregnant women to 100%.

Shasta County Baseline:

- In 1995: 7.6% of pregnant women abused amphetamines, 2.1% alcohol, 0.1% barbiturates, 8.3% cannabis, 0.4% cocaine, and 0.7% opiates.

### Percent of Women Delivering a Live Birth Known to Have Abused Various Substances Sometime During Pregnancy, Shasta County, 1995-2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cannabis</th>
<th>Amphetamines</th>
<th>Alcohol</th>
<th>Opiates</th>
<th>Cocaine</th>
<th>Barbiturates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>&lt;0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>&lt;0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>&lt;0.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PERINATAL DRUG ABUSE (continued)

Key Points:

- California law requires that all women identified as perinatal substance abusers be referred to a public health nurse.

- Nearly 50% of new mothers referred to Public Health because of substance abuse identified methamphetamine as their primary drug of choice.

- The most common illegal drug abused during pregnancy in Shasta County during the second half of the 1990s was marijuana (cannabis), followed by amphetamines. Alcohol and tobacco, which can seriously harm the fetus, are abused during pregnancy at much higher rates than illegal drugs.

- Detected amphetamine abuse during pregnancy has been declining since 1995 among Shasta County women. There has been little change in the detection of cannabis use.

- Screening for newborn drug exposure is not required and therefore erratic in Shasta County; results are not reportable to Public Health.

![Perinatal Substance Abuse, Shasta County, 1995-2000](chart)

Primary Prevention Activities:

- Educate middle and high school students about the affects of drugs on the fetus.

- Provide sober activity venues for youth.

- Increase access to good preconception and prenatal care.

- Identify high-risk mothers and provide incentives for early prenatal care visits and enrollment in alcohol or other drug treatment programs.

- Provide easy access to alcohol and other drug abuse treatment programs for all youth and pregnant women.

Data Source: California Health and Welfare Agency, Office of Perinatal Substance Abuse; Shasta County Public Health; California Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development.

SHASTA COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH