

# SBIRT COLORADO

## WOMEN & SUBSTANCE USE

### SMOKING

- Approximately one in five women in the U.S. smokes.
- More women die each year from lung cancer than from breast, uterine and ovarian cancers combined.
- The rate of lung cancer deaths in men has declined, while it has soared by 600 percent among women.
- 12–13 year-old girls become dependent much more rapidly than boys.
- Almost one-half of women smokers will ultimately die from smoking-related diseases.
- Older women smokers are twice as likely to develop heart disease.
- Women smokers who use oral contraceptives increase the heart attack risk by 1,000 percent.
- Approximately 15,000 nonsmoking women die of lung cancer annually.

### ALCOHOL AND WOMEN

- Six million women abuse or are dependent on alcohol in the U.S.
- The average woman who drinks is young, white and employed or in school.
- Women who drink alcohol are twice as likely to be depressed.
- Depression is the most frequent coexisting psychological problem for women with drinking problems.
- Daughters of alcoholics tend to have less of a physiological response to alcohol, increasing the risk of heavy drinking and dependency.
- More than two-thirds of alcohol-abusing women seeking treatment have experienced some form of childhood sexual abuse compared to one-third of women in the general population.
- Alcohol increases the breast cancer risk in some women who are moderate drinkers.
- Postmenopausal women taking hormone replacements and who drink moderate amounts have an increased risk of breast cancer.
- Alcohol is involved in as many as 73 percent of all rapes.
- Alcohol is involved in up to 70 percent of all domestic violence.

### WOMEN AS COMPARED TO MEN

- Women get drunk faster, become addicted more easily and develop alcohol-related diseases.
- Women suffer higher rates of late-onset alcohol abuse.
- Women are more susceptible to alcohol-induced brain impairment.
- Women are more likely to develop cirrhosis of the liver and other liver diseases, to develop them sooner and at lower levels of drinking.

### ALCOHOL USE IN PRE-TEENS AND TEENS

- 23 percent of young girls had their first drink before reaching their teens.
- As early as the sixth grade, girls are more likely than boys to believe they can allay bad moods or feelings with alcohol.
- One-half of high-school girls drink and more than one in four binge drink.
- Teenage girls who are heavy drinkers are five times more likely to have sex and a third less likely to use protection .

### PRESCRIPTION AND ILLICIT DRUGS

- More than 7.5 million girls and women abuse prescription drugs annually.
- Women are 48 percent more likely than men to be prescribed a narcotic, anti-anxiety or other potentially abusable drug.
- More than half of American women from 18–25 have used illicit drugs at least once in their lives.
- More than 2.5 million women abuse or are dependent on illicit drugs.
- Two-thirds of AIDS cases in U.S. women are associated with drug abuse.
- Women in state prisons are twice as likely as their male counterparts to be infected with HIV.

### PREGNANCY AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

- Drinking during pregnancy is the single greatest preventable cause of mental retardation.
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is an umbrella term used to describe the range of effects that occur in an individual whose mother drank alcohol during pregnancy.
- The only cause of FASD is alcohol use during pregnancy.
- The effects of FASD may include physical, mental, behavioral and/or learning disabilities with lifelong implications.
- About half of the pregnant women who drink say that a healthcare provider discussed drinking during pregnancy.
- 17 percent of pregnant women smoke, 3 percent binge drink and 3 percent use illicit drugs.
- Smoking during pregnancy accounts for 14 percent of premature births and 10 percent of infant deaths.
- **NO ALCOHOL USE IS SAFE DURING PREGNANCY**

Resources available at [www.improvinghealthcolorado.org](http://www.improvinghealthcolorado.org).



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