



A new government study has revealed that almost eight percent of women who are pregnant report alcohol use, leaving the topic about drinking among pregnant women in the United States an important public health issue.

Researchers from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities studied data from 2006 to 2010 on almost 14,000 pregnant women and more than 330,000 non-pregnant women, aged 18 to 44.

The study is published in the July 20 issue of the CDC's journal *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.

The results showed that about 7.6 percent of pregnant women - one-in-13 - said they drank alcohol within the past month. The rate of drinking among non-pregnant women was 51.5 percent.

Middle-aged women reported the highest use of alcohol - about 14 percent. College graduates and employed women drink about 10 percent of the time while white women reported about eight percent.

Researchers also found that about one percent of pregnant women were binge drinkers. The average frequency and intensity of binge drinking was similar among pregnant and non-pregnant women who were binge drinkers - about three times per month and six drinks on each occasion.

The reports said that on average, women with a high school education or less reported binge drinking about three times a month and having about six drinks per occasion, compared with about three times per month and about 5 drinks per occasion for college graduates.

The researchers noted that women who binge drink before pregnancy are more likely than non-binge drinkers to continue drinking during pregnancy.

Binge drinking is defined as having five or more drinks on at least one occasion in the past 30 days.

According to the CDC, Alcohol use during pregnancy can cause birth defects and developmental disabilities. Women who are pregnant or might get pregnant should abstain from using alcohol.

Alcohol consumption during pregnancy is a risk factor for poor birth outcomes including fetal alcohol syndrome, birth defects, and low birth weight.

To learn more about alcohol and pregnancy, [click here](#).