

Big improvements in preconception health trends among women of reproductive age reported

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A woman's health status before pregnancy is critical for the health and wellbeing of the fetus and mother-to-be. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has set Healthy People 2020 national

objectives for women of reproductive age, and young women are making important gains toward achieving some of those health goals, while some trends are less encouraging, as reported in a study published in *Journal of Women's Health*.

Pamela Xaverius, PhD and Joanne Salas, MPH, Saint Louis University School of Public Health and School of Medicine, MO, report substantial reductions in smoking and alcohol consumption (including drinking any alcohol and heavy drinking) among women in the U.S. ages 18-44 years. The authors analyzed data on preconception health indicators from over 500,000 women from all 50 states in the U.S. gathered between 2003-2010 from the [Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System](#).

In the article "Surveillance of Preconception Health Indicators in [Behavioral Risk Factor](#) Surveillance System: Emerging Trends in the 21st Century," they also describe positive preconception health trends related to moderate or [vigorous physical activity](#) and a 68% increase in women having an influenza shot within the previous year. Health trends that have worsened and pose a potential threat to maternal and fetal health included binge alcohol drinking and having a chronic medical condition (e.g., diabetes, high blood pressure, asthma, or obesity).

"While the trends in smoking, alcohol use, and influenza prevention have improved, the worsening in [binge drinking](#) and [chronic medical conditions](#) among reproductive aged women are important concerns," says Susan G. Kornstein, MD, Editor-in-Chief of *Journal of Women's Health*, Executive Director of the Virginia Commonwealth University Institute for Women's Health, Richmond, VA, and President of the Academy of Women's Health.

More information: The article is available free on the *Journal of Women's Health* website at <http://www.liebertpub.com/jwh>.

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