

Many women still smoke during pregnancy

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New study finds white moms-to-be are more likely to light up than blacks, Hispanics.

(HealthDay) -- Too many American women still smoke during their pregnancies, a new report finds, and rates of such smoking vary widely depending on race.

Researchers found that almost 22 percent of pregnant white women aged 15 to 44 smoked cigarettes within the previous 30 days, compared with just over 14 percent of pregnant black women and 6.5 percent of Hispanic women in the same age range.

The rate of [illicit drug use](#) during pregnancy, however, was higher among [black women](#) (7.7 percent) than among white women (4.4 percent) or Hispanic women (about 3 percent), according to the Substance Abuse and [Mental Health Services](#) Administration study, released Wednesday.

Rates of alcohol use during pregnancy were about the same for black and white women (12.8 percent and 12.2 percent, respectively), and much higher than among [Hispanic women](#) (7.4 percent), according to the study.

The findings are based on an analysis of data from the administration's 2002 to 2010 national surveys on drug use and health.

"When pregnant women use alcohol, tobacco or illicit substances they are risking health problems for themselves and poor birth outcomes for their babies," Pamela Hyde, administrator at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, said in a government news release.

"Pregnant women of different races and [ethnicities](#) may have diverse patterns of substance abuse," Hyde said. "It is essential that we use the findings from this report to develop better ways of getting this key message out to every segment of our community so that no woman or child is endangered by substance use and abuse."

More information: The March of Dimes has more about the dangers of [drinking alcohol during pregnancy](#).

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