

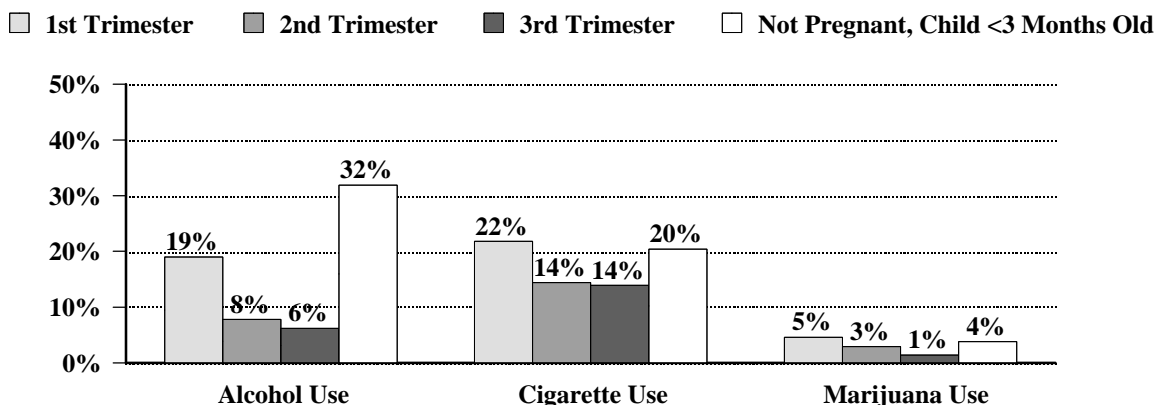
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

***National Survey Finds Relatively Low Rates of Substance Use Among Pregnant Women;
Apparent Resumption of Use After Pregnancy***

Approximately 20% of women in their first trimester of pregnancy used alcohol and/or cigarettes and 5% used marijuana in the past month,* according to data from the National Household Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH). Substance use decreased among women in their second and third trimesters of pregnancy, suggesting that many women are abstaining from substance use during the later stages of pregnancy (see figure below). However, nonpregnant women with children under 3 months old in the household had much higher rates of past month substance use compared to women in their second and third trimesters. Nearly one-third of nonpregnant women with children under 3 months old reported using alcohol in the past month, one-fifth reported cigarette use, and 4% reported marijuana use. According to the authors, “this increase implies a resumption of substance use following childbirth because new initiation of substance use among postpartum women is too rare to account for the observed differences” (p. 2). The authors suggest that “effective interventions for women to further reduce substance use during pregnancy and to prevent postpartum resumption of use could improve the overall health and well-being of mothers and infants” (p. 3).

Percentage of U.S. Women (Ages 18 to 44 Years) Reporting Past Month Alcohol, Cigarette, or Marijuana Use, by Pregnancy Trimester and Age of Youngest Child, 2002-2007



*These rates are relatively low compared to women who are not pregnant and have no children: 63% of women who were not pregnant and had no children reported past month alcohol use; 33% reported past month cigarette use, and 11% reported past month marijuana use.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, “Substance Use Among Women During Pregnancy and Following Childbirth,” *The NSDUH Report*, May 21, 2009. Available online at <http://oas.samhsa.gov/2k9/135/PregWoSubUse.cfm>.

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