Birth Briefs

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Breast Milk from Mothers Who Smoke and Drink Smells!

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Mennella and Beauchamp studied whether the odor of breast milk is altered by alcohol consumption (1991) and cigarette smoking (1998). In both cases, the answer was yes. The odor of both nicotine and ethanol peaked in 30 minutes to 1 hour after the mother smoked or drank. The studies demonstrated that changes in the odor of breast milk parallel the changes in concentration of nicotine and ethanol. Although these authors do not suggest that lactating women who smoke or drink occasionally should stop breastfeeding, they do offer the results of these studies as a reason to avoid smoking and drinking during lactation.

Women should consider the effects nicotine and alcohol may have on the infant's developing brain. They should also consider that these early experiences may influence the flavors the child finds appealing later in life. This may be one explanation for the findings that (a) children whose mothers smoke have an increased risk of smoking during adolescence (Osler, Clausen, Ibsen & Jensen, 1995) and (b) adolescent girls whose mothers drank during and after pregnancy are more likely to consume alcohol (Griesler & Kandel, 1998).

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Binge Drinking on the Rise Among Pregnant Women

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) is associated with facial malformations, dysfunction of the central nervous system, and inadequate growth, as well as hepatic and renal abnormalities (Nichols & Zwelling, 1998). In addition, prenatal exposure to binge drinking—“episodic intake of large quantities of alcohol” (Ebrahim, Diekman, Floyd & Decoufle, 1999, p. 1)—has been associated with antisocial behavior, school problems, and self-perceived learning difficulties in adolescence (Olson, Streissguth, Sampson, Barr, Bookstein & Thiede, 1997). Even though much has been publicized about FAS, Ebrahim and colleagues (1999) report a fourfold increase (from 0.7% to 2.9%) in binge drinking among pregnant women between 1991 and 1995. Most women know that drinking alcohol during pregnancy can harm the fetus (Defour, Williams, Campbell & Aitken, 1994). Perhaps, however, they do not realize that binge drinking is as risky to the fetus as frequent or daily drinking (Ebrahim, et al.,

1999). Providers of perinatal education have a crucial role in emphasizing the adverse effects of alcohol on the fetus. Those at particular risk for binge drinking are older, unmarried women who are socially isolated (Pascoe, Kokotailo & Broekhuizen, 1995).

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Please Note: A Change of Address for JPE's Editorial Office

JPE Editor Sharron Humenick recently moved from the University of Wyoming to Virginia Commonwealth University. Her relocation thus created a new base of editorial operations for *The Journal of Perinatal Education*.

The change also witnessed both a fond farewell to Virginia Cole, the journal's development editor in JPE's former office in Laramie, and a warm welcome to Nancy Perry, JPE's new managing editor in Richmond.

All manuscripts and further editorial correspondence should be addressed to the journal's new home office at VCU in Richmond:

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