
In Alaska, marijuana use before and during pregnancy was more common among younger women. Prenatal use among Alaska Native women and residents of the Northern and Southeast regions was nearly twice that of their comparison groups. It should be noted, however, that an important limitation of PRAMS is that it is based on self-reported data. The active compound of cannabis, THC, passes freely through the placental barrier. Current studies indicate that prenatal cannabis exposure is associated with an increased risk of neurobehavioral problems in offspring, including issues with attention, memory, and problem solving. Additional studies are needed to determine the health impacts associated with marijuana use around the time of pregnancy.

Recommendations

2. Screen women of childbearing age for substance use and for pregnancy intention to support contraceptive needs to reduce exposure risk to an unplanned pregnancy (see: http://www.dhss.alaska.gov/dph/PregnancyScreenWomen/Pages/screenwomen_ssbirt/Brief_Intervention-ASSIST.pdf).
3. For more facts about the health effects of marijuana, see: http://www.dbhs.alaska.gov/dph/Director/Pages/marijuana/default.aspx

References