



# Monitor on Substance Use and Pregnancy 2018

English summary

## What is the Dutch Monitor on Substance Use and Pregnancy?

The Dutch Monitor on Substance Use and Pregnancy is a population-based cross-sectional survey on women's smoking, drinking, and drug use before, during, and after pregnancy. In 2018, the monitor was conducted for the second time and was funded by the Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport.

## What did we do?

Women with young children (<2 years) answered a short questionnaire on substance use around their (most recent) pregnancy while visiting a youth health care center. They were also asked to answer some questions about other health behaviors (e.g., intake of folic acid before and during pregnancy), their partner's smoking behavior around pregnancy, and whether they had talked about smoking and alcohol use with their health care professional.

To select a sample that properly represented women with young children, data were collected at 61 youth health care centers throughout 42 randomly selected cities. Of the women that were approached at the youth health care centers, 84% participated in the study ( $N = 1855$ ). This sample was nationally representative, although women with a low educational level were somewhat underrepresented.

## What are the main results?

### Smoking:

- Of the 1855 women who participated, 15% smoked before pregnancy, 7% smoked at some time during pregnancy, 3.5% smoked during the entire pregnancy, and 11% smoked after pregnancy. In comparison with 2016, these numbers were slightly, but not significantly, lower.
- The prevalence of women who smoked before, during or after pregnancy was higher among women with a low or medium educational level than among women with a high educational level.
- More than two thirds of the women who smoked before, during or after pregnancy had a partner who also smoked at some time around the pregnancy. This percentage was the same compared to 2016.



- Of the women who smoked before pregnancy, 52% quit smoking during the first trimester through the end of the pregnancy. 23% of the women who smoked before pregnancy, continued smoking during the entire pregnancy (i.e., every trimester).
- Of the women who successfully quit smoking (i.e., remained smoke-free through the end of the pregnancy), 43% relapsed after pregnancy.

who have a low or medium educational level, and the development of effective relapse-prevention interventions that can be provided to women during and after pregnancy. In addition, it is important to create more awareness among women about the risk of alcohol use before and during pregnancy. Because drug use before or during pregnancy is low, interventions tailored to specific risk groups would appear most adequate.

**This is an English summary of the original Dutch report.**

#### Alcohol and drug use:

- Of the women who participated, 44% reported alcohol use during the four weeks before pregnancy. In addition, 4.2% used alcohol during pregnancy (in most cases only a few nips). In comparison with 2016, these numbers were virtually the same.
- 1.2% of all participating women used cannabis before pregnancy and 0.5% used cannabis during pregnancy. 0.2% of the women used other drugs (e.g., ecstasy) during pregnancy.

#### What are the implications for practice?

Although there seems to be a declining (non-significant) trend with respect to some substance use among women around pregnancy, the present study demonstrates that it remains an important focus in terms of public health in the upcoming years. For example, more attention needs to be given to partners who smoke, smoking women



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