

**The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA)
at Columbia University**

**Women Under the Influence:
Prevention and Policy Opportunities Across the Life Span**

July 2006

GIRLS

<p>Parents and Families</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set high expectations, make them known, enforce consequences • Communicate openly, consistently, and honestly • Show disapproval of substance use; don't accept it as a rite of passage • Exercise discipline • Monitor behavior, friends, activities, including TV, Internet use • Set a good example • Provide perspective on ads, media messages about substances • Be aware of risks and get help fast if needed • Eat dinner together regularly • Educate parents about the risks their daughters face
<p>Elementary, Middle, and High Schools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know signs and symptoms; be on look-out for problems • Provide comprehensive, culturally competent, age- and gender-specific prevention programming • Create interventions targeted to signs and times of high risk • Send clear messages about unacceptability of substance use • Encourage extracurricular activities • Set clear and consistent expectations for behavior and consequences for substance use • Foster student attachment to school
<p>Physicians and Healthcare Workers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain family history of substance abuse • Identify and treat conditions and behaviors associated with substance abuse (i.e., depression, anxiety, eating disorders, sexual or physical abuse) • Educate patients about substance use and related risks and behaviors, including pregnancy-related risks • Recognize signs and symptoms of substance abuse and know how to respond • Pharmacists can monitor patients' prescriptions and notify them and their physicians of unsafe patterns of consumption
<p>Advertising and the Entertainment Media</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refrain from linking smoking and drinking with unrealistically thin images of women, or sex appeal • If female characters do smoke or drink, show the negative consequences of such behavior • Conduct substance abuse prevention campaigns
<p>Researchers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct gender-specific research on risks and consequences of substance abuse, and how best to prevent and treat it • Research the roles of race/ethnicity and income in the development of substance abuse and addiction in girls and in their recovery

Policy Makers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Institute regulatory controls on tobacco and alcohol advertising and sales to protect underage youth• Impose higher taxes on alcohol and tobacco• Institute and enforce public smoking bans• Enforce laws to limit underage drinking and smoking• Ban commercial sales and gifts of alcohol to minors• Conduct anti-substance-use awareness and prevention campaigns• Develop gender-specific national screening guidelines and instruments for doctors, dentists and pharmacists, and train professionals to implement them• Provide financial support and incentives for gender-specific prevention and treatment• Require insurers to reimburse health professionals for educating patients about substance abuse and for providing gender-specific screening and treatment• Fund gender-specific research
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COLLEGE WOMEN

<p>Parents and Families</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss substance use risks and expectations before child leaves home • Continue open discussion throughout college years • Show disapproval of substance use; don't accept it as a rite of passage • Set a good example • Be aware of risks and get help fast if needed
<p>Colleges and Universities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop clear anti-substance use policies and make them known • Identify and reach out to girls using or at risk of using • Enforce campus policies consistently and effectively • Know unique risks to female students and target them accordingly • Provide gender-appropriate screening and treatment options • Work with surrounding community to limit density of alcohol retail outlets • Prohibit tobacco and alcohol promotions, such as "ladies' night" • Ban all tobacco and alcohol advertising on campus • Offer smoke-free and alcohol-free social events, including alternative spring breaks
<p>College Health Care and Counseling Centers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screen victims of sexual violence and those struggling with depression, eating disorders or other mental health problems for substance abuse • Intervene when risks are identified • Recognize that females abusing substances may exhibit less overt risk behaviors than males • Educate college women about substance use and its related risks and behaviors, including pregnancy-related risks
<p>Advertising and the Entertainment Media</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not promote or advertise alcohol on college campuses • Do not advertise alcohol in college sports programming where significant portions of the viewers are underage • Prohibit marketing directly to students at college-sponsored events, college bars, or fraternity/sorority parties. • Refrain from linking smoking and drinking with unrealistically thin images of women, or sex appeal • If female characters do smoke or drink, show the negative consequences of such behavior • Conduct substance abuse prevention campaigns
<p>Researchers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document effectiveness of parental interventions • Examine how universities can better address prevention and treatment issues for college women • Determine venues through which college women can be reached • Research the roles of race/ethnicity and income in the development

	of substance abuse and addiction in college women and in their recovery
Policy Makers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Institute regulatory controls on tobacco and alcohol advertising and sales to protect underage youth• Impose higher taxes on alcohol and tobacco• Institute and enforce public smoking bans• Enforce laws to limit underage drinking and smoking• Ban commercial sales and gifts of alcohol to minors• Conduct anti-substance-use awareness and prevention campaigns• Develop gender-specific national screening guidelines and instruments for doctors, dentists and pharmacists, and train professionals to implement them• Provide financial support and incentives for gender-specific prevention and treatment• Require insurers to reimburse health professionals for educating patients about substance abuse and for providing gender-specific screening and treatment• Fund gender-specific research

ADULT WOMEN

Parents and Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be alert to signs of trouble • Assist in getting treatment for substance abuse or for other problems, such as depression, that might increase risk
Physicians and Healthcare Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate patients about substance use and related risks and behaviors, including pregnancy-related risks • Recognize signs and symptoms of substance abuse and know how to respond • Provide better training for health professionals to prevent and treat substance abuse in women • Pharmacists can monitor patients' prescriptions and notify them and their physicians of unsafe patterns of consumption
Advertising and the Entertainment Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refrain from linking smoking and drinking with unrealistically thin images of women, or sex appeal • If female characters do smoke or drink, show the negative consequences of such behavior • Conduct substance abuse prevention campaigns
Researchers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct gender-specific research on risks and consequences of substance abuse, and how best to prevent and treat it • Research the roles of race/ethnicity and income in the development of substance abuse and addiction in adult women and in their recovery • Determine the venues through which women in this age group can be reached, and who is best equipped to identify, prevent and treat substance abuse in adult women
Policy Makers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impose higher taxes on alcohol and tobacco • Institute and enforce public smoking bans • Conduct anti-substance-use awareness and prevention campaigns • Develop gender-specific national screening guidelines and instruments for doctors, dentists and pharmacists, and train professionals to implement them • Provide financial support and incentives for gender-specific prevention and treatment • Require insurers to reimburse health professionals for educating patients about substance abuse and for providing gender-specific screening and treatment • Fund gender-specific research

OLDER WOMEN

Parents and Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be alert to signs of trouble, particularly prescription drugs and alcohol • Assist in getting treatment for substance abuse and other related problems, such as depression, that might increase risk
Physicians and Healthcare Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate patients about benefits of smoking cessation, safe use of alcohol and prescription drugs, and the consequences of abuse • Provide better training for health professionals to prevent and treat substance abuse in older women • Look for signs of substance abuse and arrange for appropriate treatment • Pay close attention to responses to prescription medication • Pharmacists can monitor patients' prescriptions and notify them and their physicians of unsafe patterns of consumption • Monitor patients' drinking habits and medications before writing prescriptions
Advertising and the Entertainment Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If female characters do smoke or drink, show the negative consequences of such behavior • Conduct substance abuse prevention campaigns
Researchers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research the extent of alcohol abuse and the extent, correlates, causes, and consequences of prescription drug abuse and addiction among older people • Research the roles of race/ethnicity and income in the development of substance abuse and addiction in older people and in their recovery • Conduct research to inform prevention and treatment efforts that are effective in retirement communities
Policy Makers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impose higher taxes on alcohol and tobacco • Institute and enforce public smoking bans • Conduct anti-substance-use awareness and prevention campaigns • Develop gender-specific national screening guidelines and instruments for doctors, dentists and pharmacists, and train professionals to implement them • Provide financial support and incentives for gender-specific prevention and treatment • Require insurers to reimburse health professionals for educating patients about substance abuse and for providing gender-specific screening and treatment • Fund gender-specific research

PREGNANT WOMEN

Parents and Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be alert to signs of trouble • Assist in getting treatment/help for substance abuse and other problems, such as depression, anxiety, or other mental health problems, or domestic violence, that might increase risk • Provide emotional, physical, economic and social support
Physicians and Healthcare Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate patients about the dangers of all forms of substance use during pregnancy • Provide better training for health professionals to prevent and treat substance abuse in pregnancy women • Identify women at risk and treat substance-abusing women before they become pregnant • Provide treatment/help for mental health problems or domestic violence that might increase risk
Advertising and the Entertainment Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If female characters do smoke or drink, show the negative consequences of such behavior • Conduct substance abuse prevention campaigns
Researchers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further examine substance abuse among pregnant women, consequences, and how to prevent and treat it • Research the roles of race/ethnicity and income in the development of substance abuse and addiction in pregnant women and in their recovery
Policy Makers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impose higher taxes on alcohol and tobacco • Institute and enforce public smoking bans • Conduct anti-substance-use awareness and prevention campaigns focused on the risks of prenatal and postnatal substance use • Develop national screening guidelines and instruments for healthcare professionals for pregnant women • Provide financial support and incentives for prevention and treatment for pregnant women • Require insurers to reimburse health professionals for educating patients about substance abuse and for providing gender-specific screening and treatment