

Importance of Planned Pregnancies



In the United States, nearly half (45%) of all pregnancies are unintended.¹ Amongst adolescents, this rate is even higher with 75% of pregnancies to people under the age of 20 being unintended.² An unintended pregnancy is a pregnancy that is mistimed, unplanned, or unwanted at the time of conception.³

Effects of unintended pregnancy

Unintended pregnancy can have negative effects on the pregnant person and their child. Unintended pregnancies are associated with delayed prenatal care, decreased number of prenatal care visits, and increased risk of maternal depression and anxiety.⁴ Not receiving proper prenatal care can put both the pregnant person and their child at risk.

Unintended pregnancy is also costly. Unintended pregnancies cost taxpayers an estimated \$21 billion in 2010.² The estimated cost to Minnesota in 2010 was \$128.7 million.⁵ These expenditures include costs for prenatal care, labor and deliver, post-partum care, and 1 year of infant care.



Link to FASD

Unintended pregnancy can lead to prenatal alcohol exposure. 53.6% of women in their childbearing years drink alcohol.⁶ While most people quit drinking alcohol after they find out they are pregnant, nearly half of pregnancies are unplanned and many people do not find out they are pregnant until at least 4-6 weeks after conception. This means that people may be unintentionally exposing their developing embryo to alcohol before they find out they are pregnant.

Prenatal alcohol exposure is one of the leading causes of preventable birth defects in the United States. Children with prenatal alcohol exposure are at risk of having an FASD. FASD, or fetal alcohol spectrum disorders, is a range of effects that can include physical, mental, behavioral, and/or learning disabilities with lifelong implications. By preventing unintended pregnancy, we can also prevent prenatal alcohol exposure and FASD.



Preventing unintended pregnancy

If you are sexually active, there is a variety of safe and effective methods of contraception that can be used to prevent pregnancy. Using birth control correctly and consistently will significantly decrease your risk of unplanned pregnancy. You can learn more about different contraceptive methods on the CDC web site. Talk with your health care provider about which option is best for you.



Sources:

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