



Screening for Substance Abuse

Purpose: To identify pregnant women and parents at risk for alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drug use. Screening for substance abuse can lead to further questions regarding depression and domestic violence risk. The **Administrative Questions** listed in the Data Collection and Reporting System (DCRS) reflect an adaptation of the **4P's Plus**. It is a short screening tool designed to quickly identify expectant mothers in need of in-depth assessment or follow-up monitoring.

Population: Pregnant women and parents of children ages 0-5, for MIECHV

When to Administer: Substance abuse screening is done at the first week of intake along with the other **Administrative Questions**

What the 4 P's Stand for:

1. **Parent substance use**—asks about the mother's parents drug and alcohol use to provide information about participant's experiences with parenting.
2. **Partner substance use**—asks about the mother's partner's use of drugs and alcohol. This information gives us an idea of the company the mother surrounds herself with, but is also a key in to domestic violence.
3. **Past use of substances**—ask about the mother's personal use of beer, wine, or liquor; cigarettes; marijuana; and other drugs at any time in her life. NOTE: It is important to specify "beer, wine, or liquor" as opposed to "alcohol" in general, because there are some families who do not consider beer or wine to be alcohol.
4. **Pregnancy**—ask about the mother's use of substances in the month prior to learning she was pregnant. NOTE: It is important to ask about the month before she knew she was pregnant, which is very different from the month before she was pregnant. This normalizes the question and minimizes defensive responding.
5. **Current substance use**—ask how frequently the mother is currently using alcohol, cigarette, marijuana, and other drugs.

Scoring & Interpretation

The substance abuse screening questions are not used to calculate a score in the way that most of the other MIECHV assessments do. Nonetheless, mother's responses to questions can identify potential risks that home visitors can address.

- **Risk for substance use during pregnancy**—Mothers are considered low risk for substance use during pregnancy if they have never used any substances. They are considered average risk for substance use during pregnancy, if they have used substances—but not in the month before they knew they were pregnant. Mothers are considered high risk for substance use during pregnancy if they use any substances in the month before they knew they were pregnant. NOTE: This is particularly relevant for mothers who are currently pregnant or considering becoming pregnant.
- **Current substance use**—
 - If the mother reports using substances "Every day" or "3-6 days a week", she should be referred for a substance abuse assessment.
 - If the mother reports using substances "1-2 days/week" or "<1 day/week", she should be referred for prevention education services.
 - If the mother answers all questions "Did not drink/do drugs", no referral is needed.

Entering the Data into DCRS

Questions about substance use are entered into the Administrative Questions tab in DCRS under the heading "Drugs and Alcohol".

Drugs/Alcohol

Did either of your parents have any problems with drugs or alcohol?

Does your partner have any problem with drugs or alcohol?

Is your partner's temper ever a problem for you?

Have you ever drunk beer, wine, or liquor?

Currently, about how often do you usually drink beer, wine or liquor per week?

Currently, about how often do you use any drug such as marijuana, cocaine or heroin per week?

Currently, how often do you use tobacco products?

Do you or have you ever had history of substance abuse?

Chasnoff, I. J., McGourty, R. F., Bailey, G. W., Hutchins, E., Lightfoot, S. O., Pawson, L. L., ... & Campbell, J. (2005). The 4P's Plus© screen for substance use in pregnancy: clinical application and outcomes. *Journal of perinatology*, 25(6), 368-374.