

## T-ACE

The T-ACE is a 4-item instrument appropriate for detecting heavy alcohol use in pregnant women (Sokol, Martier, & Ager, 1989). T-ACE uses the **A**, **C**, and **E** questions from the CAGE screening tool and adds one on **Tolerance** for alcohol. The first question assesses tolerance by asking if it takes more than it used to, to get “high” (i.e., intoxicated). T-ACE has sensitivity equal to the longer Michigan Alcohol Screening Test (MAST) and greater than the CAGE (Bradley, Bush, McDonell, Malone, & Fihn, 1998). It has been validated only for screening pregnant women with risky drinking (Russell, 1994).

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| 1. How many drinks does it take for you to feel high? ( <b>T</b> olerance)  |
| 2. Have people <b>A</b> nnoyed you by criticizing your drinking?<br>A) Yes B) No  |
| 3. Have you ever felt you ought to <b>C</b> ut down on your drinking?<br>A) Yes B) No   |
| 4. Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or get rid of a hangover? ( <b>E</b> ye-opener)<br>A) Yes B) No |

### Scores

Any woman who answers more than two drinks on question 1 is scored 2 points. Each “yes” to the additional 3 questions scores 1. Scoring 2 or more is considered a positive screen (Chang, Wilkins-Haug, Berman, & Goetz, 1999), and the woman should receive—or be referred to a specialist for—further assessment. At the same time, a woman could drink 2 drinks per day during pregnancy and not get a positive screen using this tool. She may not be at risk for alcoholism, but because of her pregnancy she’s drinking at an unsafe level.

### Sources:

- Bradley, K. A., Bush, K. R., McDonell, M. B., Malone, T., & Fihn, S. D. (1998). Screening for problem drinking: Comparison of CAGE and AUDIT. Ambulatory Care Quality Improvement Project (ACQUIP). Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, 13(6), 379–388.
- Chang, G., Wilkins-Haug, L., Berman, S., & Goetz, M. A. (1999). The TWEAK: Application in a prenatal setting. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, 60(3), 306–309.
- Russell, M. (1994). New assessment tools for risk drinking during pregnancy: T-ACE, TWEAK, and others. *Alcohol Health and Research World*, 18(1), 55–61.
- Sokol, R. J., Martier, S. S., & Ager, J. W. (1989). The T-ACE questions: Practical prenatal detection of risk drinking. *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, 160(4), 863–870.