



The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study

ABOUT THE STUDY: What everyone should know!

Over 17,000 Kaiser Permanente members voluntarily participated in a study to find out about how stressful or traumatic experiences during childhood affect adult health. After all the identifying information about the patients was removed, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention processed the information the patients provided in their questionnaires,

Here's What We Learned:

Many people experience harsh events in their childhood. 63% of the people who participated in the study had experienced at least one category of childhood trauma. Over 20% experienced 3 or more categories of trauma [which we call Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACEs\)](#).

- 11% experienced emotional abuse.
- 28% experienced physical abuse.
- 21% experienced sexual abuse.
- 15% experienced emotional neglect.
- 10% experienced physical neglect.
- 13% witnessed their mothers being treated violently.
- 27% grew up with someone in the household using alcohol and/or drugs.
- 19% grew up with a mentally-ill person in the household.
- 23% lost a parent due to separation or divorce.
- 5% grew up with a household member in jail or prison.

ACEs seem to account for one-half to two-thirds of the serious problems with drug use. They increase the likelihood that girls will have sex before reaching 15 years of age, and that boys or young men will be more likely to impregnate a teenage girl.

Adversity in childhood causes mental health disorders such as depression, hallucinations and post-traumatic stress disorders.



The more categories of trauma experienced in childhood, the greater the likelihood of experiencing:

- alcoholism and alcohol abuse
- chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- depression
- fetal death
- poor health-related quality of life
- illicit drug use
- ischemic heart disease (IHD)
- liver disease
- risk for intimate partner violence
- multiple sexual partners
- sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)
- smoking
- obesity
- suicide attempts
- unintended pregnancies

If you experienced childhood trauma, you're not alone.

Talk with your family health practitioner about what happened to you when you were a child. Ask for help.

For more information about the ACE Study, [email carolredding@acestudy.org](mailto:carolredding@acestudy.org), visit www.cestudy.org, or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at: <http://www.cdc.gov/NCCDPHP/ACE/>