

Alcohol Use and Your Health

Accessible version: <https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/alcohol-use.htm>

Drinking too much can harm your health. Excessive alcohol use leads to more than 140,000 deaths in the United States each year, shortening the lives of those who died by an average of 26 years. The economic costs of excessive alcohol consumption in 2010 were estimated at \$249 billion, or \$2.05 a drink.

What is considered a “drink”?

US Standard Drink Sizes



12 ounces
5% ABV beer



8 ounces
7% ABV malt liquor



5 ounces
12% ABV wine



1.5 ounces
40% (80 proof) ABV distilled spirits (examples: gin, rum, vodka, whiskey)

ABV = Alcohol by Volume

Excessive alcohol use includes:



Binge Drinking

For women, 4 or more drinks consumed on an occasion

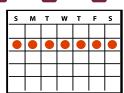


For men, 5 or more drinks consumed on an occasion



Heavy Drinking

For women, 8 or more drinks per week



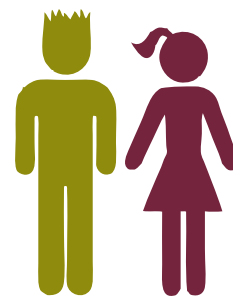
For men, 15 or more drinks per week



Any alcohol use by pregnant women



Any alcohol use by people younger than 21



If you choose to drink, do so in moderation.

DON'T DRINK AT ALL if you are younger than 21, or if you are or may be pregnant, or if you have health problems that could be made worse by drinking.

FOR WOMEN, 1 drink or less in a day



FOR MEN, 2 drinks or less in a day



Or nondrinking

People who don't drink alcohol **SHOULD NOT START** for any reason. **DRINKING LESS** is better for health than drinking more.



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

Excessive alcohol use has immediate effects that increase the risk of many harmful health conditions. These are most often the result of binge drinking. Over time, excessive alcohol use can lead to the development of chronic diseases and other serious problems.

Short-term health risks

Injuries

- Motor vehicle crashes
- Falls
- Drownings
- Burns

Violence

- Homicide
- Suicide
- Sexual assault
- Intimate partner violence

Alcohol poisoning

Reproductive health

- Risky sexual behaviors
- Unintended pregnancy
- Sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV
- Miscarriage
- Stillbirth
- Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders



Long-term health risks

Chronic diseases

- High blood pressure
- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Liver disease
- Digestive problems

Cancers

- Breast
- Mouth and throat
- Liver
- Colon and rectum
- Esophagus
- Voice box

Learning and memory problems

- Dementia
- Poor school performance

Mental health

- Depression
- Anxiety

Social problems

- Family problems
- Job-related problems
- Unemployment

Alcohol use disorders