

ALCOHOL - DO YOU KNOW THE FACTS?



Alcohol is the most highly abused drug in the US.
1 in 8
or almost 30 million Americans have an Alcohol Use Disorder.

Alcohol use in our society is on the rise.

Since 2003, the number of Americans unable to control their alcohol intake almost doubled, with the steepest rise seen in females and those over 65.

Alcohol is a drug of choice.

Alcohol availability in our society made it a drug of choice. It is estimated that 47 millions of Americans suffer from mental illness, and the majority of them do not receive treatment. Almost half turn to substances, such as alcohol, to cope.

The following are problems that lead to self-medication with alcohol:

- Depression
- Stress
- Anxiety
- Trauma
- Loneliness
- Sleep problems
- Anger



When does an alcohol use become a problem?

If someone struggles to feel good without alcohol, or partakes in heavy drinking or binge drinking on regular basis.

Binge drinking occurs after 5 or more drinks for men or four drinks for women on a single occasion.

Heavy drinking means having 7 drinks a week for women compared to 15 drinks for men.

Drinking too much can cause many health problems - liver inflammation leading to cirrhosis and liver failure, high blood pressure that increases risk of stroke and heart attack, heart failure and irregular heart beat, pancreatitis, brain damage that can affect mood, cognition (thinking ability). A variety of cancers are alcohol use related - esophageal cancer, head and neck cancer, liver cancer, colorectal cancer and breast cancer in women.

Alcohol intoxication increases the risk of

- accidents and car crashes
- violent behavior
- suicide and homicide
- risky behavior - such as unsafe sex, experimenting with or overusing other substances

What Is a Standard Drink?

<p>12 fl oz of regular beer</p>  <p>about 5% alcohol</p>	=	<p>8-9 fl oz of malt liquor (shown in a 12 oz glass)</p>  <p>about 7% alcohol</p>	=	<p>5 fl oz of table wine</p>  <p>about 12% alcohol</p>	=	<p>1.5 fl oz shot of distilled spirits (gin, rum, tequila, vodka, whiskey, etc.)</p>  <p>about 40% alcohol</p>
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Each beverage portrayed above represents one standard drink of "pure" alcohol, defined in the United States as 0.6 fl oz or 14 grams. The percent of pure alcohol, expressed here as alcohol by volume (alc/vol), varies within and across beverage types. Although the standard drink amounts are helpful for following health guidelines, they may not reflect customary serving sizes.

What is an Alcohol Use Disorder?

Anybody who meets two or more of the following symptoms, qualifies as meeting criteria for an alcohol use disorder:

- drinking more than originally planned
- craving alcohol
- drinking and being sick from drinking that interfered with responsibilities at home, work or school
- continued to drink even if it caused problems with family and friends
- wanted to cut down or stop but could not
- spending more time drinking than usual
- drinking even though it caused damage to person's health

- getting into situations that increase chances of getting hurt - such as driving, swimming, having unsafe sex etc
- experiencing withdrawal symptoms when not drinking

Binge drinking occurs after 5 or more drinks for men or 4 drinks for women on a single occasion. Heavy drinking means having 7 drinks a week for a women compared to 15 drinks for a men.

Alcohol in children and adolescents.

As children turn into adolescents, they often crave independence from parents and new freedoms. This can easily lead to alcohol experimentation, often in a form of binge drinking. Unfortunately, **binge drinking in teens** can lead to:

- increased likelihood of alcohol addiction in adulthood
- trouble at school
- higher risk of suicide
- change in brain development
- memory problems
- legal problems
- alcohol poisoning.

- higher likelihood of becoming addicted to alcohol



Women and alcohol - complicated relationship.

Two thirds of American women consume alcohol regularly. This statistic has been steady for a while but there has been increase in amount of alcohol women drink. As per recent reports, 25% of females in US are heavy drinkers (more than 7 drinks a week). Increased stress at work and home, changes in perception as well as aggressive marketing to women has lead to increased consumption of alcohol by women. **Higher socioeconomic status** is associated with higher risk of alcohol abuse.

Women are more vulnerable to effects of alcohol. Since alcohol is water soluble, it reaches higher levels in women as their body contain less water and more fat than men. Also, women are usually smaller-framed and have lower levels of enzymes that break down alcohol and its byproducts. Alcohol lingers in female body longer so it has more opportunity to cause damage.

Another difference is that many women tend to drink alone, at home by themselves - often due to undiagnosed or untreated mental health component of anxiety or depression.



Over 7 million children live in households where at least one parent has a drinking problem. These children often suffer from emotional or physical traumas which can lead to:

- low self-esteem
- depression and anxiety
- sleep problems
- trouble concentrating
- emotional detachment
- stomach problems
- feeling of shame and guilt

*I only drink **Vodka** on two occasions
When it's my birthday ... and when it's not.*

Heavy drinking is not only accepted - it's expected and often celebrated.