




WHAT IS “BINGE DRINKING”?

Binge drinking can be defined as drinking five or more standard drinks in a row for men, or four or more for women, in about two hours. A “standard drink” is considered to be the following:

-  12-ounce regular beer, at about 5 percent alcohol
-  5 ounces of wine, at about 12 percent alcohol
-  1.5 ounces of hard liquor, at about 40 percent alcohol

Even though each of these drinks come in different sizes, they are all examples of one standard drink. Alcohol affects everyone differently based on their height and weight, and it generally affects women more quickly than men.

WHEN HAS SOMEONE HAD TOO MUCH?

When someone ingests an alcoholic drink, it absorbs into their bloodstream and begins to be processed by the liver. The liver can process about a single drink per hour. If someone drinks faster than their liver can process alcohol, they will feel the effects of intoxication. Someone who is intoxicated will exhibit behavioral changes and impaired judgment. There are a few ways to tell if someone is really intoxicated, such as a blood alcohol test, or a Breathalyzer test. But often one can tell if someone is intoxicated by their behavior.

They may show these effects and signs:

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Relaxed appearance | Risk-taking |
| Loss of coordination | Slurred speech, loud volume |
| Slow reaction time | Glazed look in the eye |

BAC

“BAC” stands for blood alcohol concentration, and it simply means the amount of alcohol found in someone’s bloodstream. Often decimal numbers will be thrown around, and it’s important to understand what they mean. For example, a high BAC of 0.1 means that there is 0.1 grams of alcohol for every 100 mL of blood. The number is a ratio of blood to alcohol, and alcohol is so powerful that a small amount can impact the body greatly. Here are examples of different levels of intoxication:

Sober:
0.0 percent BAC

Legally intoxicated:
0.08 percent BAC

Very impaired:
0.08–0.4 percent BAC. At this blood alcohol level, a person may have difficulty walking and speaking. Other symptoms may include confusion, nausea, and drowsiness.

Extreme risk of damage:
Above 0.4 percent BAC. At this blood alcohol level, there is high risk for coma or death.

RESOURCES

- Centers for Disease Control:**
www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/binge-drinking.htm
- National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism:**
www.niaaa.nih.gov/alcohols-effects-health

in the know

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BINGE DRINKING:

FROM BINGE TO CRINGE



HEALTH EFFECTS OF BINGE DRINKING

Repeated binges can leave the body with serious damage. After a night of drinking, the next morning's hangover may be the least of a binge drinker's concerns. Even a single episode of binge drinking could have serious effects on your brain and body.

Heart

Binge drinking can cause irregular heartbeat, high blood pressure, or heart failure.

Lungs

Binge drinking can inhibit the gag reflex, which can allow for fluids, including vomit, to enter the lungs, and may lead to choking.

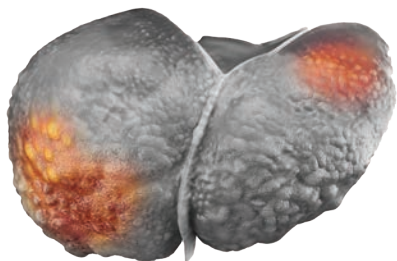
Kidneys

Alcohol is a diuretic, which makes the body produce urine more rapidly. This leads to dehydration as the body quickly rids itself of fluid.

Pancreas

Just one session of binge drinking can lead to dangerously low blood sugar, also known as hypoglycemia.

These are just the short-term effects of what one episode of binge drinking does to the body's vital organs. While these are bad, the long-term effects are often permanent. If someone constantly binge drinks, they are at risk for the following problems:



Blood and immune system issues

Chronic binge drinking leads to anemia and a suppressed immune system.

Bones and muscles

Alcohol interferes with the way the body absorbs calcium, which forms bones. This leads to osteoporosis.

Brain and nervous system

Binge drinking increases the risk of stroke and leads to dementia.

But all these ways alcohol affects the body are only the inward health risks. These do not consider the many ways it can be dangerous by impairing one's judgment.

EVERY BINGE IS A RISK

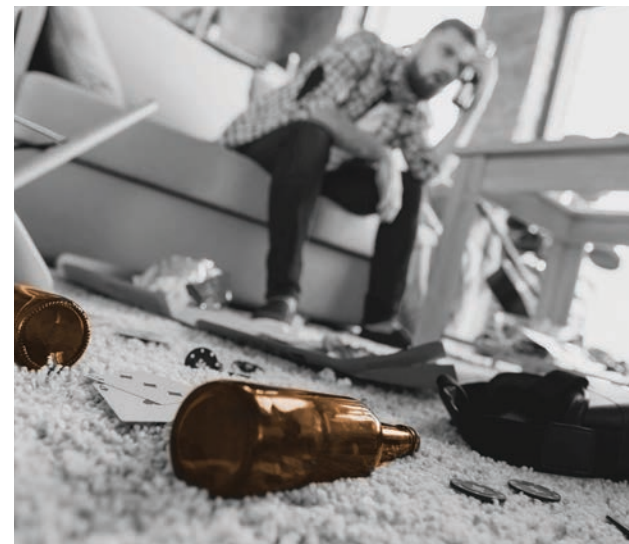
With each drink, a binge drinker is more likely to take risks and do things that are a danger to them, or a danger to those around them. Even if they are not immediately endangering themselves, they are likely embarrassing themselves. It is estimated that about half of all alcohol-related deaths involve binge drinking. When looking at the facts, it's easy to see why binge drinking is a bad idea. Many accidents or problems can occur on a binge, such as:

- Memory and learning problems
- Unintentional injuries, like car accidents, burns, falls, and alcohol poisoning
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Unintended pregnancy
- Fetal alcohol disorders
- Alcohol use disorders

WHAT CAUSES BINGE DRINKING?

A person's mental state and the people they hang out with can influence their decision to binge drink. Other factors include:

- Being surrounded in a drinking culture, such as some colleges
- Access to alcohol
- Boredom
- Peer pressure
- Experience with trauma
- Difficulty coping
- Depression and anxiety



IS BINGE DRINKING THE SAME AS ALCOHOLISM?

While binge drinking does not necessarily mean that a person is an alcoholic, it certainly can lead to alcoholism after repeated binges. Alcoholism can be defined as the inability to control drinking, increased alcohol tolerance, and continued drinking despite negative consequences.

The dangers of binge drinking, coupled with its likelihood to lead to alcoholism, are a great reason to avoid it altogether.



BY THE NUMBERS

Binge drinking is a huge problem amongst people. It is a simple case of drinkers overindulging and not thinking responsibly.

| Binge drinking is most common among young adults ages 18-34.

| Binge drinking is twice as common among men than among women.

| Most people younger than 21 who drink alcohol tend to binge drink.

**MAKE THE RESPONSIBLE,
HEALTHY CHOICE...**

DON'T BINGE DRINK!