



down the hatch...

8.1 million Americans suffer from alcoholism.



People between the ages of 18 and 29 have the highest rate of alcohol problems.

Down the Hatch

- 1 in every 12 adults in the United States has problems with alcohol abuse.
- Alcohol abuse and alcoholism cuts across race, gender, and nationality.
- Nearly three times as many men as women have problems with alcohol abuse.
- 38 percent of all traffic-related deaths are alcohol-related.
- Alcoholics are five times as likely to die in traffic-related accidents.
- Approximately 3 out of 10 Americans will be involved in a traffic-related accident involving alcohol.
- Over half of all reported incidents of domestic violence and homicides are alcohol-related.
- One third of all suicides are alcohol-related.
- 4,000-12,000 babies are born each year with physical and mental disabilities related to Fetal Alcohol Syndrome.

SAMPLE COPY

Resources

Al-Anon/Alateen

1-888-4AL-ANON

<http://www.al-anon.alateen.org>

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)

Check your local phone book for listings

<http://www.aa.org>

National Association for Children of Alcoholics

1-888-554-COAS

National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence

HOPELINE: (800) NCA-CALL

<http://www.ncadd.org>

National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (NOFAS)

1-800-66-NOFAS

<http://www.nofas.org>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

1-800-662-HELP

<http://www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov>

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overcoming ALCOHOL



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What is a safe level of drinking?

Drinking alcoholic beverages is a part of many social situations. Walking the line between being social and being destructive can be a tricky balance. For adults without special health risks, the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism suggests men consume no more than 4 drinks and women no more than 3 drinks per day. Over one week, men should not exceed 14 drinks and women should not exceed 7 drinks.

What is one drink?



12 ounces of beer 5 ounces of wine 1.5 ounces of distilled, 80 proof spirits

Note: The actual drinks people pour in bars and restaurants tend to contain more alcohol than these standard sizes.

Impairment from drinking is measured by the amount of alcohol in a person's blood. This blood-alcohol concentration is known as BAC.

Legal limits for what is considered a "safe" BAC vary. When the legal limit for driving is set at .08 BAC, a man weighing 170 pounds would have to drink more than four drinks in an hour on an empty stomach to reach a BAC of .08. A woman weighing 135 pounds, would have to drink more than three drinks in an hour on an empty stomach. Alcohol is metabolized more slowly than people can drink, and continued drinking at these rates will rapidly exceed legal limits.

When driving, **no amount** of alcohol consumption is guaranteed safe. A person's driving abilities can be impaired even when the BAC is below the legal limit. The best advice for safe driving is to not drink at all.

Alcohol Abuse is Dangerous

Excessive drinking is a huge health risk. Heavy drinking can damage the liver, brain, and other organs. It increases the risks of certain cancers, obesity, and stroke, and is linked to accidents, suicides, and homicides. Excessive alcohol consumption can impair reproductive functioning, depress the immune system (increasing risks of contracting infectious diseases such as tuberculosis and pneumonia), and is the leading cause of liver disease. Heavy drinking among mothers of unborn children may result in Fetal Alcohol Syndrome – causing growth deficiencies, developmental delays, behavioral problems, intellectual impairment and other effects on a child's central nervous system. Alcohol passes to the infant when a mother drinks during breastfeeding.

Alcoholism is a Disease

Many factors can influence a person's risk for alcoholism, such as stress in the workplace or relationships, friends and social situations, and the availability of alcohol. Alcoholism can be treated through counseling and medication, but it cannot be cured. Those addicted to alcohol carry elevated risks for reverting to alcohol abuse in the future. An alcoholic's best chance for recovery is abstinence – not drinking at all.



Signs of Alcoholism

- **Craving.** Alcoholics feel a strong need to drink in the same way all people feel a need for food and water.
- **Lack of control.** Once an alcoholic starts drinking, it is difficult to stop.
- **Tolerance.** Alcoholics need to drink greater amounts in order to achieve the same high.
- **Alcohol Dependence.** After an alcoholic stops drinking, he or she experiences withdrawal symptoms (shakiness, nausea, anxiety, or sweating).

Alcohol Abuse

Alcohol abuse can be just as destructive as alcoholism. Regular, heavy drinkers can suffer from problems meeting work, family and school responsibilities. Drunk-driving accidents, arrests, and medical conditions can also be linked to excessive drinking.

What are some of the signs of alcohol abuse?

You sometimes...

- feel a need to cut down on the amount you drink.
- feel guilty or regretful about drinking.
- feel annoyed when people criticize the amount you drink.
- have a drink in the morning to ease a hangover or calm your nerves.

How to help

Often times people who abuse alcohol or are alcohol dependent don't want to get help. This can be challenging to those who care for or are negatively affected by an alcoholic's behavior. But there are ways to lend a hand before a person hurts himself or others.

Stop making excuses. It's natural to protect someone you care about. However, for a person with alcohol problems to come to terms with the problem, he or she must experience the consequences of alcohol abuse.

Intervene. To talk with someone about an alcohol problem, wait until he or she is calm and sober. In a caring manner, be specific about how drinking has caused problems. Name recent alcohol-related incidents, such as arguments or accidents. Do not make threats, but explain what actions you will take to protect yourself – such as not accompanying the person to social events involving alcohol – if he or she does not seek help. Interventions may make a difference in a person's motivation to get help and, in time, are often remembered positively.

Call on friends. It often takes several interventions, from several different people, in order to convince an alcoholic to seek help. Any caring, nonjudgmental person can help, but friends who are also recovering from alcohol problems can be particularly persuasive. Some families join with health care professionals to intervene as a group.

Get professional help. Before you intervene, research local treatment options. If the person is open to getting help, make an appointment with a counselor and/or accompany the person to an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting or other treatment program.

Find support. You are not alone, and you are not to blame. Most communities have support groups for friends and family members of alcoholics. These groups can help you take care of yourself and work through the feelings related to your loved one's problems.

Remember, alcoholism and alcohol abuse are treatable. With support, treatment and hard work, loved ones can recover.



"An alcoholic's best chance for recovery is abstinence – not drinking at all."