

NATIONAL ALCOHOL SCREENING DAY FACT SHEET

Types of Alcohol Problems

- Relatively low levels of alcohol consumption may increase risk for motor vehicle crashes, medication interactions, fetal effects, strokes caused by bleeding, and certain cancers.¹
- The term at-risk drinking includes drinking beyond moderate levels either on a regular basis or on a particular occasion.²
- Alcohol use disorders include alcohol dependence (known as alcoholism) and alcohol abuse.³
- Alcohol abuse is characterized by clinically significant impairment or distress but does not entail physical dependence.⁴
- Alcohol dependence (alcoholism) is characterized by impaired control over drinking, tolerance, withdrawal syndrome when alcohol is removed, neglect of normal activities for drinking, and continued drinking despite recurrent related physical or psychological problems.⁵

Who has an Alcohol Problem?

- Almost 49 percent of U.S. adults abstain from alcohol or drink fewer than 12 drinks per year.⁶
- About 22 percent of adult Americans are light or occasional drinkers.⁷
- About 29 percent of American adults--nearly 3 in 10--are "risky drinkers" whose drinking pattern places them at increased risk for alcohol disorders.⁸
- Among those risky drinkers are more than 7 percent of adult Americans --about 18 million persons--who met diagnostic criteria for alcohol disorders (either alcohol dependence or alcohol abuse) in 2002.⁹

Harmful Effects of Alcohol

- Over the last twenty years an average of fifty percent of all traffic accident fatalities involved alcohol.¹⁰
- Approximately one third of deaths due to unintentional injury in the United States are estimated to be alcohol related.¹¹
- One in four victims of violent crime report that the offender had been drinking alcohol prior to committing the offense.¹²
- Heavy drinking raises the risk for high blood pressure, heart disease, certain cancers, traumatic injury, violence, suicides, birth defects and overall mortality.¹³
- The economic costs of alcohol abuse in the United States are estimated to be approximately \$185 billion annually.¹⁴

Alcohol and Women

- Women overall drink less than men but are more likely to experience adverse consequences including damage to the heart muscle, liver, and brain, trauma resulting from auto crashes, interpersonal violence, and death.¹⁵
- The progression of alcoholism appears to be faster in women than in men.¹⁶
- Because of gender differences in alcohol damage, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S Department of Agriculture recommend that women who drink consume no more than one drink a day.¹⁷

Alcohol and Older Drinkers

- While persons aged 65 and older consume less alcohol and have fewer alcohol-related problems than younger drinkers, aging may increase sensitivity to alcohol and heightens the risk for traffic crashes, medication interactions, falls and fractures, cognitive impairment, and medical conditions worsened by drinking.¹⁸
- Because of age-related body changes, the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism recommends that older drinkers consume no more than one drink a day.¹⁹

Alcohol and Youth

- Young persons who begin drinking before age 13 are four times more likely to develop alcohol dependence and twice as likely to develop alcohol abuse as those who begin drinking at age 21.²⁰
- Approximately 20% of 8th graders, 35% of 10th graders, and 48% of 12th graders report having consumed alcohol during the past month.²¹
- About 12% of 8th, 22% of 10th, and 28% of 12th graders report binge drinking (five or more drinks on a single occasion during the past two weeks).²²
- Almost 40% of high school seniors perceive no great risk in consuming four to five drinks nearly every day.²³

Alcohol and College Students

- In 2002, 64% of full-time college students (aged 18-22) reported consuming at least one alcoholic drink in the past 30 days.²⁴
- Over 44% of full-time college students reported consuming five or more drinks on the same occasion at least once in the past 30 days.²⁵
- 1400 college students between the ages of 18 and 24 die each year from alcohol-related unintentional injuries, including motor vehicle crashes.²⁶
- More than 600,000 students between the ages of 18 and 24 are assaulted each year by another student who has been drinking.²⁷

NATIONAL ALCOHOL SCREENING DAY IS APRIL 8, 2004

CALL 1-877-311-NASD (6273) OR GO TO WWW.NATIONALALCOHOLSCREENINGDAY.ORG

TO FIND A SCREENING SITE NEAR YOU

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