Alcohol Use in the United States:

» Prevalence of Drinking: According to the 2015 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), 86.4 percent of people ages 18 or older reported that they drank alcohol at some point in their lifetime; 70.1 percent reported that they drank in the past year; 56.0 percent reported that they drank in the past month.¹

» Prevalence of Binge Drinking and Heavy Alcohol Use: In 2015, 26.9 percent of people ages 18 or older reported that they engaged in binge drinking in the past month; 7.0 percent reported that they engaged in heavy alcohol use in the past month.² (See sidebar on page 2 for definitions of binge drinking and heavy alcohol use.)

Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) in the United States:

» Adults (ages 18+): According to the 2015 NSDUH, 15.1 million adults ages 18 and older³ (6.2 percent of this age group⁴) had AUD. This includes 9.8 million men³ (8.4 percent of men in this age group⁴) and 5.3 million women³ (4.2 percent of women in this age group⁴).
  • About 6.7 percent of adults who had AUD in the past year received treatment. This includes 7.4 percent of males and 5.4 percent of females with AUD in this age group.⁵

» Youth (ages 12–17): According to the 2015 NSDUH, an estimated 623,000 adolescents ages 12–17⁶ (2.5 percent of this age group⁷) had AUD. This number includes 298,000 males⁶ (2.3 percent of males in this age group⁷) and 325,000 females⁶ (2.7 percent of females in this age group⁷).
  • About 5.2 percent of youth who had AUD in the past year received treatment. This includes 5.1 percent of males and 5.3 percent of females with AUD in this age group.⁵

Alcohol-Related Deaths:

» An estimated 88,000⁸ people (approximately 62,000 men and 26,000 women⁸) die from alcohol-related causes annually, making alcohol the third leading preventable cause of death in the United States. The first is tobacco, and the second is poor diet and physical inactivity.⁹

» In 2014, alcohol-impaired driving fatalities accounted for 9,967 deaths (31 percent of overall driving fatalities).¹⁰
Economic Burden:
» In 2010, alcohol misuse cost the United States $249.0 billion.\textsuperscript{11}
» Three-quarters of the total cost of alcohol misuse is related to binge drinking.\textsuperscript{11}

Global Burden:
» In 2012, 3.3 million deaths, or 5.9 percent of all global deaths (7.6 percent for men and 4.0 percent for women), were attributable to alcohol consumption.\textsuperscript{12}
» In 2014, the World Health Organization reported that alcohol contributed to more than 200 diseases and injury-related health conditions, most notably DSM–IV alcohol dependence (see sidebar), liver cirrhosis, cancers, and injuries.\textsuperscript{13} In 2012, 5.1 percent of the burden of disease and injury worldwide (139 million disability-adjusted life-years) was attributable to alcohol consumption.\textsuperscript{12}
» Globally, alcohol misuse was the fifth leading risk factor for premature death and disability in 2010. Among people between the ages of 15 and 49, it is the first.\textsuperscript{14} In the age group 20–39 years, approximately 25 percent of the total deaths are alcohol attributable.\textsuperscript{15}

Family Consequences:
» More than 10 percent of U.S. children live with a parent with alcohol problems, according to a 2012 study.\textsuperscript{16}

Underage Drinking:
» Prevalence of Underage Alcohol Use:
  • Prevalence of Drinking: According to the 2015 NSDUH, 33.1 percent of 15-year-olds report that they have had at least 1 drink in their lives.\textsuperscript{17} About 7.7 million people ages 12–20\textsuperscript{18} (20.3 percent of this age group\textsuperscript{19}) reported drinking alcohol in the past month (19.8 percent of males and 20.8 percent of females\textsuperscript{19}).
• **Prevalence of Binge Drinking:** According to the 2015 NSDUH, approximately 5.1 million people (about 13.4 percent) ages 12–20 (13.4 percent of males and 13.3 percent of females) reported binge drinking in the past month.

• **Prevalence of Heavy Alcohol Use:** According to the 2015 NSDUH, approximately 1.3 million people (about 3.3 percent) ages 12–20 (3.6 percent of males and 3.0 percent of females) reported heavy alcohol use in the past month.

**Consequences of Underage Alcohol Use:**

• Research indicates that alcohol use during the teenage years could interfere with normal adolescent brain development and increase the risk of developing AUD. In addition, underage drinking contributes to a range of acute consequences, including injuries, sexual assaults, and even deaths—including those from car crashes.

**Alcohol and College Students:**

• **Prevalence of Alcohol Use:**
  • **Prevalence of Drinking:** According to the 2015 NSDUH, 58.0 percent of full-time college students ages 18–22 drank alcohol in the past month compared with 48.2 percent of other persons of the same age.
  • **Prevalence of Binge Drinking:** According to the 2015 NSDUH, 37.9 percent of college students ages 18–22 reported binge drinking in the past month compared with 32.6 percent of other persons of the same age.
  • **Prevalence of Heavy Alcohol Use:** According to the 2015 NSDUH, 12.5 percent of college students ages 18–22 reported heavy alcohol use in the past month compared with 8.5 percent of other persons of the same age.

• **Consequences—Researchers estimate that each year:**
  • 1,825 college students between the ages of 18 and 24 die from alcohol-related unintentional injuries, including motor-vehicle crashes.
  • 696,000 students between the ages of 18 and 24 are assaulted by another student who has been drinking.
  • 97,000 students between the ages of 18 and 24 report experiencing alcohol-related sexual assault or date rape.
  • Roughly 20 percent of college students meet the criteria for AUD.
  • About 1 in 4 college students report academic consequences from drinking, including missing class, falling behind in class, doing poorly on exams or papers, and receiving lower grades overall.

**Alcohol and Pregnancy:**

• The prevalence of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) in the United States was estimated by the Institute of Medicine in 1996 to be between 0.5 and 3.0 cases per 1,000.

• More recent reports from specific U.S. sites report the prevalence of FAS to be 2 to 7 cases per 1,000, and the prevalence of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) to be as high as 20 to 50 cases per 1,000.
Alcohol and the Human Body:

- In 2015, of the 78,529 liver disease deaths among individuals ages 12 and older, 47.0 percent involved alcohol. Among males, 49,695 liver disease deaths occurred and 49.5 percent involved alcohol. Among females, 28,834 liver disease deaths occurred and 43.5 percent involved alcohol.29

- Among all cirrhosis deaths in 2013, 47.9 percent were alcohol related. The proportion of alcohol-related cirrhosis was highest (76.5 percent) among deaths of persons ages 25–34, followed by deaths of persons ages 35–44, at 70.0 percent.30

- In 2009, alcohol-related liver disease was the primary cause of almost 1 in 3 liver transplants in the United States.31

- Drinking alcohol increases the risk of cancers of the mouth, esophagus, pharynx, larynx, liver, and breast.32

For more information, please visit: https://www.niaaa.nih.gov


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