

Do you drink?

Some people drink alcohol once in a while. Some are addictive drinkers or alcoholics.

“Binge drinking” is a style of drinking you may hear about. It carries a number of risks and negative consequences.

Who drinks?

61% of 18–25 year olds | **53%** of people 26 and older

What is binge drinking?

Binge drinking can include:

- ◆ Drinking a lot in a short amount of time.
- ◆ Drinking a lot...period.
- ◆ Reaching a very high blood alcohol level.
- ◆ Experiencing problems as a result of your drinking.

Binge drinking isn't just about how many drinks you have, but this is how it is typically defined.

Here's one definition of binge drinking:

- ◆ **If you're a man**, consuming 5 or more drinks in a row one or more times in a 2 week period.
- ◆ **If you're a woman**, consuming 4 or more drinks in a row one or more times in a 2 week period.

This is a helpful estimate. But it doesn't take into account your weight or the time over which you're drinking. These variables affect how buzzed or intoxicated a person gets.

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What's wrong with binge drinking?

People who attain high blood alcohol levels face several problems.

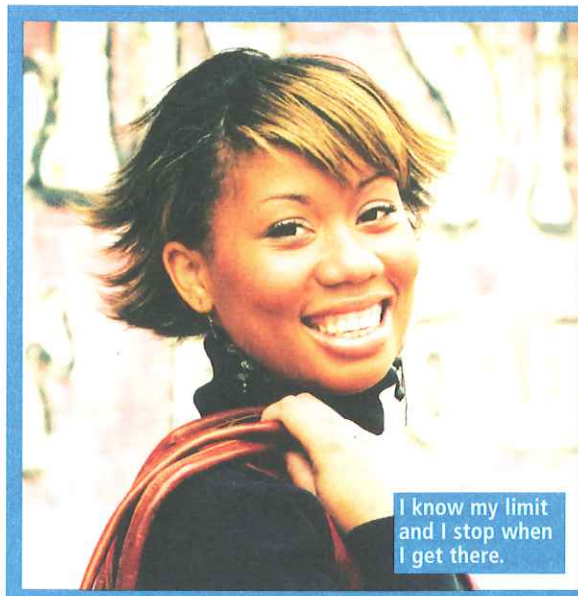
■ Tolerance

Tolerance means that over time you have to drink more to get the same buzz you used to get.

Tolerance is *not* a good thing.

- ◆ It results in greater health risks.
- ◆ It makes drinking much more expensive. A person has to drink more, which means buying more, to get a buzz.
- ◆ Tolerance can be a warning sign that a person is becoming dependent on alcohol.

Frequent binge drinking can lead to long-term problems with alcohol.



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■ Blackouts

Ever hear of someone who can't remember the night before, or can't remember how he or she got home from a party? This is funny, right? It makes for a good story, right?

Wrong. This is scary. When a person drinks, alcohol enters the bloodstream through the stomach and small intestine. Then alcohol goes to every organ of the body, including the brain.

Imagine how much a person's brain has been affected to have these memory lapses that can last for hours.

■ Making Mistakes

If a person drinks enough, the alcohol in the brain gets in the way of his or her ability to process information.

People in this state can't think clearly or use good judgment. The likelihood that they'll get behind the wheel, go into a stranger's bedroom, or won't bother with safer sex increases greatly.

Binge drinking increases the risk of:

- ◆ alcohol-related injuries or death
- ◆ legal problems
- ◆ unplanned pregnancy
- ◆ transmission of STD, including HIV
- ◆ acquaintance rape

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You don't have to binge.

Avoid drinking games. The point of drinking games is to get drunk and to get drunk fast. The same goes for pounding or funneling your drink—it gets you drunk quickly.

Slow down! What's the rush? Think about drinking for quality, not quantity. Need help slowing down? Space your drinks by alternating with nonalcoholic beverages. Nurse your drink and make it last.

Eat first. With food in your stomach, alcohol gets absorbed more slowly. This will keep you from getting intoxicated as quickly.

Learn more about how alcohol affects you. Check with your health care provider or an alcohol education program to get a blood alcohol chart for a person of your size and gender.

Consider the consequences. Think about the risks of getting drunk, and especially the risks of binge drinking.

Don't Drink, If...

- ◆ You really don't want to.
- ◆ You're upset, anxious or angry.
- ◆ You're doing other drugs.
- ◆ There's a chance you might need to make a decision about sex.
- ◆ You're pregnant or think you might be.
- ◆ You'll be driving.
- ◆ You're taking certain medicines. Ask your health care provider for guidance about drinking and medications.

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What happens when you binge drink?

When a person drinks alcohol fast, blood alcohol level goes up quickly. Here are some examples:

Women

A woman who weighs 140 pounds drinks 4 beers over 4 hours. She has a blood alcohol level (BAL) of .064. This is a risky level. Her reaction time is off and her cognitive judgment is beginning to go downhill.

Suppose the same woman drinks the 4 beers over 1 hour. She has a blood alcohol level of .112. She is legally drunk, with a clear breakdown of judgment, coordination and significantly impaired reaction time. She may be close to blacking out.

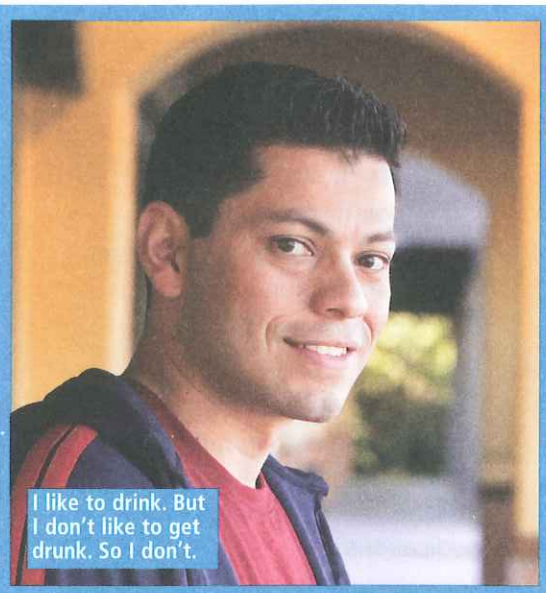
A higher blood alcohol level means a greater risk of negative consequences.

Men

A man who weighs 180 pounds drinks 6 beers over 4 hours. He has a blood alcohol level of .061. His reaction time is off and his cognitive judgment is beginning to go downhill.

Suppose the same man drinks the 6 beers over 1 hour. He has a blood alcohol level of .109. He is legally drunk, with a clear breakdown of judgment, coordination and significantly impaired reaction time. He may be close to blacking out.

.016% per hour People only burn about .016% off their blood alcohol level each hour. There is no way to sober up more quickly. Drinking coffee, exercising, vomiting or taking cold showers won't help you sober up.



I like to drink. But I don't like to get drunk. So I don't.

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What's a Drink?

These all have the same amount of alcohol:

- ◆ 12-ounce beer
- ◆ 10-ounce microbrew
- ◆ 4-ounce glass of wine
- ◆ 8-ounce malt liquor
- ◆ 1¼-ounce shot of 80-proof liquor
- ◆ 1-ounce shot of 100-proof liquor



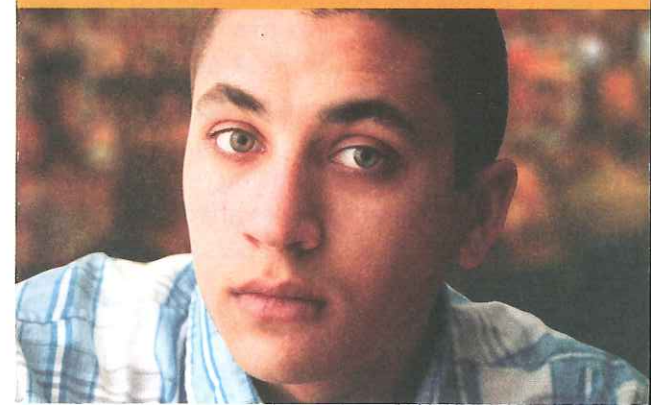
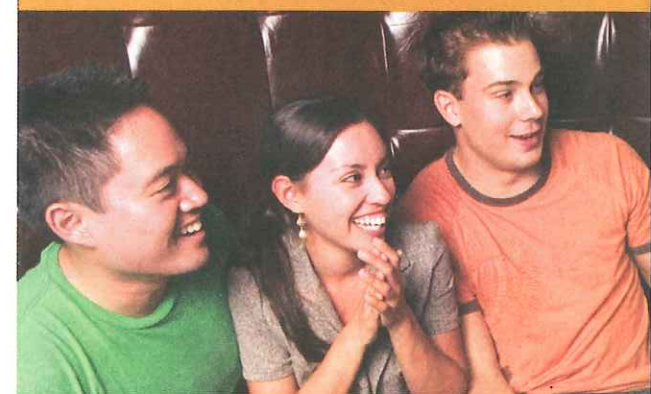
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What Happens When You Drink?

BAL	Effect
.02%	Relaxed, reaction time goes down
.04%	Relaxation continues, buzz develops and reaction time continues to slow
.06%	Cognitive judgment impaired, less able to process information
.08%	Motor coordination goes downhill
.10%	Clear breakdown in judgment and coordination, visibly sloppy
.15-.25%	High risk of blackouts and injuries
.25-.35%	Can pass out, lose consciousness, risk of death
.40-.45%	Lethal dose for most people

This information is not meant to convey that any drinking is safe.

Binge Drinking



Professional models were used in all photos.

This brochure is not intended as a substitute for your health professional's opinion or care.

Series Editor: Barbara A. Cooley, MA, CHES.

Text: Jason Kilmer, MS.

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