



Press Release

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Contact: [Division of News & Electronic Media](#)
(404) 639-3286

1 in 4 high school students and young adults report binge drinking

60 percent of high school students who drink, binge drink

More than 1 in 4 high school students and adults ages 18 to 34 engaged in a dangerous behavior known as binge drinking during the past month, according to the findings from a report by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). The report shows that each year more than 33 million adults have reported binge drinking, defined as having four or more drinks for women and five or more drinks for men over a short period of time, usually a couple of hours. And the report said levels of binge drinking have not declined during the past 15 years.

The CDC report found men are more than twice as likely to binge drink than women (21 percent compared to 10 percent). It said binge drinking is more common among non-Hispanic whites (16 percent of whom binge drink) than among non-Hispanic blacks, (10 percent of whom binge drink).

“Binge drinking, increases many health risks, including fatal car crashes, contracting a sexually transmitted disease, dating violence, and drug overdoses,” said [CDC Director Thomas R. Frieden, M.D., M.P.H.](#) “Excessive alcohol use remains the third leading preventable cause of death in the United States and leads to a wide range of health and social problems.”

In this report, CDC scientists analyzed data on self reports of binge drinking within the past 30 days for about 412,000 U.S. adults aged 18 years and older from the 2009 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) and for approximately 16,000 U.S. high school students from the 2009 National Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS).

“Alarming, almost 1 in 3 adults and 2 in 3 high school students who drink alcohol also binge drink, which usually leads to intoxication,” said Dr. Robert Brewer, M.D., M.P.H., alcohol program leader at CDC and one of the authors of the report. “Although most binge drinkers are not alcohol-dependent or alcoholics, they often engage in this high risk behavior without realizing the health and social problems of their drinking. States and communities need to consider further strategies to create an environment that discourages binge drinking.”

Drinking too much, including binge drinking, causes more than 79,000 deaths in the United States each year. Binge drinkers also put themselves and others at risk of car crashes, violence, the risk of HIV transmission and sexually transmitted diseases, and unplanned pregnancy. Over time, drinking too much can lead to liver disease, certain cancers, heart disease, stroke, and other chronic diseases. Binge drinking can also cause harm to a developing fetus, such as fetal alcohol spectrum disorders, if a woman drinks while pregnant.

Binge drinking varies widely from state to state, with estimates of binge drinking for adults ranging from 6.8 percent in Tennessee to 23.9 percent in Wisconsin. It is most common in the Midwest, North Central Plains, lower New England, Delaware, Alaska, Nevada, and the District of Columbia.



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For more information on binge drinking, visit www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns or www.cdc.gov/alcohol. Members of the public who are concerned about their own or someone else's binge drinking can call 1-800-662-HELP to receive assistance from the national Drug and Alcohol Treatment Referral Routing Service. For state-specific estimates of alcohol-related deaths and Years of Potential Life Lost (YPLL) by condition, visit the Alcohol-Related Disease Impact (ARDI) system at <https://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/ardi/HomePage.aspx>.

About Vital Signs

CDC Vital Signs is a new report that will appear on the first Tuesday of the month as part of the CDC journal Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR). Vital Signs is designed to provide the latest data and information on key health indicators – cancer prevention, obesity, tobacco use, alcohol use, access to health care, HIV/AIDS, motor vehicle passenger safety, health care-associated infections, cardiovascular health, teen pregnancy, infant mortality, asthma and food safety.

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