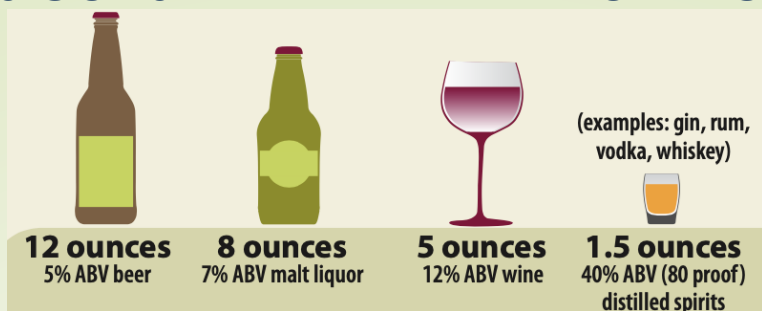


ALCOHOL USE

WHAT IS CONSIDERED A “DRINK” OF ALCOHOL?



BAD DECISIONS

Alcohol can permanently damage the **frontal lobes** and make people more prone to developing depression. The frontal lobes control emotions and impulses, and are responsible for planning, forming ideas, and making decisions.

LEARNING AND MEMORY

Drinking alcohol can permanently damage the **hippocampus**, which is key for learning and remembering. Of all the damage that alcohol can do to a developing brain, underage drinking harms memory the most.

SLUGGISH SYSTEM

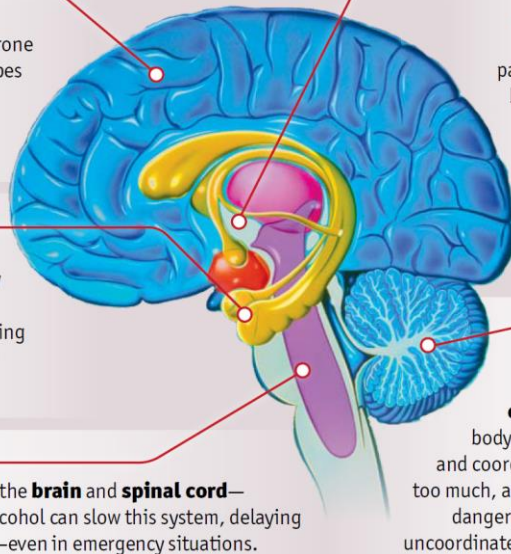
The central nervous system—made up of the **brain** and **spinal cord**—sends messages throughout the body. Alcohol can slow this system, delaying a person’s responses to external stimuli—even in emergency situations.

BASIC FUNCTIONS

Alcohol can impair the **hypothalamus**. This part of the brain controls basic—and important—body functions like blood pressure, body temperature, and heart rate.

SLOWED SENSES

Alcohol affects the **cerebellum**, which the body relies on for awareness and coordination. After drinking too much, a person might misjudge dangerous situations or be too uncoordinated to prevent accidents.

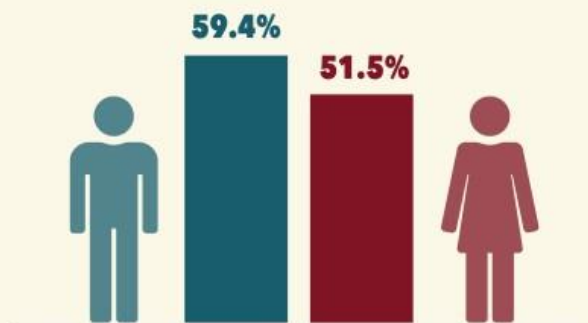


ALCOHOL USE & YOUR HEALTH

Drinking too much can harm your health. Excessive alcohol use leads to about 88,000 deaths in the United States each year and shortens the life of those who die by almost 30 years. Further, excessive drinking cost the economy \$249 billion in 2010. Most excessive drinkers are not alcohol dependent.

MONTHLY ALCOHOL USE

Percentage of U.S. men and women who reported drinking alcohol in the past month.



SOURCE: 2018 National Survey on Drug Use and Health

WHAT IS EXCESSIVE ALCOHOL USE?



Binge Drinking

For women, 4 or more drinks consumed on one occasion



For men, 5 or more drinks consumed on one occasion



Heavy Drinking

For women, 8 or more drinks per week



For men, 15 or more drinks per week



Any alcohol used by pregnant women



Any alcohol used by those under the age of 21 years



ALCOHOL USE

WHAT ARE THE HEALTH RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH ALCOHOL USE?

Alcohol has significant short-term and long-term health risks that can effect us in a variety of ways:

Short-Term Health Risks

Injuries

- Motor vehicle crashes
- Falls
- Drownings
- Burns

Violence

- Homicide
- Suicide
- Sexual assault
- Intimate partner violence

Alcohol poisoning

Reproductive health

- Risky sexual behaviors
- Unintended pregnancy
- Sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV
- Miscarriage
- Stillbirth
- Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs)



Long-Term Health Risks

Chronic diseases

- High blood pressure
- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Liver disease
- Digestive problems

Cancers

- Breast
- Mouth and throat
- Liver
- Colon

Learning and memory problems

- Dementia
- Poor school performance

Mental health

- Depression
- Anxiety

Social problems

- Lost productivity
- Family problems
- Unemployment

Alcohol dependence

If you choose to drink, do so in moderation:

DO NOT DRINK AT ALL if you are under the age of 21, or if you are or may be pregnant, or have health problems that could be worse by drinking.

FOR WOMEN, up to 1 drink a day



FOR MEN, up to 2 drinks a day



➤ Additional Resources:

- [National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism](#)
- [CDC Page for Excessive Alcohol Use](#)



ALCOHOL USE

How can you tell if alcohol is a problem for you?

Ask yourself the following questions:

- Do you have concerns about your drinking, why you drink, how much, and/or how you feel when you drink?
- Has someone close to you expressed concern about your drinking?
- Do you get annoyed when someone brings up your drinking?
- Do you ever try to get “extra” drinks at a party to make sure you get enough?
- Have you ever decided to stop or reduce your drinking, but it didn’t last very long?
- Do you hangout with a crowd where drugs and alcohol are easy to get?
- Do you drink more than your friends?
- Do a few drinks allow you be more yourself – more the person you would like to be?
- Have you ever had a few drinks before going to class, work, or before appointments?
- Do you keep a bottle in your apartment or car so it will always be handy if you need it?
- Do you say or do things when you drink that you really regret the next day?
- When things are stressful at work, school, in your home life, or in relationships, do you drink to forget about it or to make yourself feel better?
- Do you sometimes forget things that happen while you were drinking?
- Has drinking affected your relationships? Have you lost friends as a result of your use or behavior while intoxicated?
- Have you ever been hospitalized or arrested as a result of alcohol or drug use?

A “yes” to three or more questions could mean that alcohol has become problematic for you.

(USCB Alcohol and Drug Program)